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**LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE**

**OF THE**

**EARL OF ST. VINCENT.**

**VOL. I.**







**LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE**  
*Admiral* **OF**  
**JOHN, EARL OF ST. VINCENT,**  
**G. C. B.,**  
**ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET,**  
**&c. &c. &c.**

**BY**  
**EDWARD PELHAM BRENTON,**  
**CAPTAIN IN HER MAJESTY'S NAVY,**  
**AUTHOR OF THE "NAVAL HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN." ETC.**

**IN TWO VOLUMES.**

**VOL. I.**

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TO

**THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF MINTO,**

**FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY,**

**THIS WORK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED**

**BY HIS LORDSHIP'S**

**MOST OBEDIENT HUMBLE SERVANT,**

**THE AUTHOR.**





## P R E F A C E.

WHEN the printing of this work was nearly completed, I received "Sir John Barrow's Life of Lord Howe;" and, as the author of that book and myself appear to have touched on the same subjects, it may be right to say, that we have held no previous communication together.

In a note at p. 428 of Sir J. Barrow's book, mention is made of the loss of a letter written by Earl Howe to Earl St. Vincent. It is my duty to state, that neither my sister nor myself ever saw that document. If I had been in possession of it, I should have sent it to Sir John Barrow for his work, or should have published it in my own. I should not, however, now have alluded to the subject, if it had not been painfully associated in my mind with the affidavit of the Executors of Earl St. Vincent, spoken

of at p. 7 of this volume. Our researches in the muniment room were limited to the "*Letter and Order Books*." We never presumed to look at any letters addressed *to* his lordship.

I have lately learnt with much concern the death of Mr. Newnham Collingwood. Had I known it earlier, I should not have spoken of him with any mark of disapprobation; and I trust, even as it is, his surviving relatives will not think I have treated him with any thing like personal disrespect.

In the following pages I have endeavoured to draw a faithful picture from life. My duty was to avoid every thing like concealment, extenuation, or flattery. Professing to be of no party, I may, probably, subject myself to the censure of many, but I shall have the satisfaction of knowing, that impartial men will concur with me; and, wanting this, I should still have the approval of my own conscience. A partizan can never be relied on, either as a biographer or an historian.

18, York Street, Gloucester Place,  
February 10th, 1838.

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# **LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE**

**OF THE**

## **EARL ST. VINCENT.**

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### **CHAPTER I.**

**Preliminary Observations — Origin of these Memoirs — Genealogy of Earl St. Vincent—Early Life— Education — Removed to Greenwich School — Is diverted from the Law by the advice of his Father's Coachman— Determines to go to sea — Runs away from School and conceals himself on shipboard — Distress of his Mother and Sisters— He obtains the consent of his Parents, and is introduced to Lady Burlington — By her to Commodore Townshend — Joins the Gloucester, and sails for Jamaica — His bill Protested — His Resolution — He is Promoted to the Rank of Lieutenant—Serves at Quebec with General Wolfe and Sir Charles Saunders, and is made Commander — He obtains Post rank — Is appointed to the Alarm, the first coppered frigate—She is nearly lost at Marseilles—Is appointed to the Foudroyant — Is in Lord Keppel's Action — Observations on that affair.**

**As the present work owes its origin to my intimate personal acquaintance with the noble and distinguished individual who is the subject of it, I think it well at the outset to make a brief allusion to the circumstances which afforded me the honour and advantage of that acquaintance,**

and which ultimately led to the commencement and completion of the present undertaking.

The connection of my family with the Earl of St. Vincent was owing to one of those fortuitous circumstances which are so frequent in the naval service. My brother, the present Rear-Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton, had been appointed first lieutenant of the Alliance store-ship, bound to the Mediterranean with supplies for the fleet on that station ; but, just before she sailed, he received a private letter informing him that he was appointed first lieutenant of the Diamond, a very fine frigate, at that time commanded by his friend Sir Sidney Smith.

Delighted with this piece of good fortune, my brother immediately made it known to his captain, the late worthy and gallant Vice-Admiral Cumming ; but that officer told him, that, situated as he then was, on the eve of sailing with so important a charge, he could not allow him to quit the ship until his successor had joined. That successor, fortunately, as it turned out, did *not* join, and the ship proceeded to Gibraltar, and thence to Corsica. At the latter place, my brother, through the kindness of his captain, represented his situation to Sir John Jervis, who sent for him, inquired into his private history, and then said to him, “ I have

appointed you first lieutenant of the Gibraltar, of eighty guns. Go to Calder, and he will tell you more about it."

After the Gibraltar had received so much damage on the Pearl Rock in 1796, (her escape from which danger was altogether miraculous—see Naval History) she was ordered to England. Sir John Jervis removed my brother into the *Barfleur*, and, after the glorious termination of the battle of the 14th February, took him into the *Ville de Paris*. He then inquired if he had any brothers; — "for," said he, "I will do the best I can for the sons of officers." On being informed that my youngest brother was in the *Romney*, with his godfather, Sir James Wallace, on the Newfoundland station, he sent for him, and as soon as he had served his time, made him a lieutenant in the *Petterel* sloop of war. \* The admiral then inquired for me, and, being informed that I was with Vice-Admiral the Honourable William Waldegrave, he said he could not do better for me at that time. As soon, however, as the Vice-Admiral was succeeded on the Newfoundland station by Rear-Admiral Sir Charles Pole, Lord St. Vincent, who had, in the

\* He was subsequently, after some very successful cruises, and having made many valuable captures, mortally wounded in hoarding a French letter of marque off Barcelona.



mean time, come to the head of the Admiralty, wrote to him, and asked him to promote me. Sir Charles never had a vacancy as long as I was with him ; but I was instantly removed from sixth to be first lieutenant of the *Agincourt*, his flag ship. In the following year, I was removed to go out in the *Theseus* to the East Indies, with my friend Admiral Waldegrave, afterwards Lord Radstock. But this arrangement was not effected, his lordship never having hoisted his flag again ; and the *Theseus* was sent out to the West Indies, with the squadron under the orders of the late Admiral Sir George Campbell.

On our arrival at Jamaica, I was appointed commander of the *Lark* sloop of war. This was the act of Lord St. Vincent, who, being First Lord of the Admiralty, had included me in the promotion of the 29th of April, 1802.

His kindness followed me to the day of his death ; being, as he said, “ the son of an officer, and having had a brother killed in the service.”

On my return home in the *Lark*, in August, 1802, I paid off my ship at Woolwich, and waited on his lordship at the Admiralty. He received me very kindly ; and, in the following year, on the renewal of the war, he gave me the

command of the Merlin sloop of war. I saw no more of Lord St. Vincent until I returned from the coast of North America in the Spartan, in 1813, when he invited me to Rochetts. My eldest sister had long been staying there on a visit to Lady St. Vincent, and indeed the whole of my family at different times experienced the greatest attentions from him. During this visit, his Lordship frequently led me to converse with him on many subjects connected with the naval service, and, by the depth of his observations, soon convinced me that he had a master mind.

Deeply sensible of the advantages I thus enjoyed, in my free intercourse with this great man, I availed myself of every occasion to obtain his opinions and sentiments, on the events of the war in which he had borne so conspicuous a share, both as a commander-in-chief and as a cabinet minister.

I soon afterwards told his lordship that I committed to paper whatever he said to me on historical subjects. His answer was, "You are perfectly right, sir, I wish you to do it." Encouraged by this kindness, I asked if his lordship would have any objection to furnish me with a history of his early life, as far back as he could remember.

“That I will, with great pleasure,” said he:

It was the fulfilment of this promise which occasioned the undertaking of this work. It also led to the publication of the Naval History: for, finding that I was fond of inquiry, he gave my eldest sister and myself access to his muniment room; when I was in town, he desired she would write to me, and tell me to procure a large blank book, and to come down and copy his letters, public and private, while he was first lord of the Admiralty and commander-in-chief in the Channel and Mediterranean.

I lost not a moment in procuring a letter book, which I sent to my sister, with a request that, before she made one extract, she would ask Lord St. Vincent to write in it with his own hand that I had his permission to undertake the work.

“Madam,” said the Earl, “your brother has acted with judgment in making this request, and I have great satisfaction in complying with it.”

His Lordship then took the book, and wrote in it as follows:

“Captain Edward Brenton has permission to make extracts or copies of such letters or orders standing in my letter and order books while commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean and

Channel fleets, as he may conceive useful to him.

“ Dated at Rochetts, the 16th day of May, 1817.

“ ST. VINCENT.\* ”

\* I had abundant reason to be satisfied with my precaution in the above particular : for no sooner was the breath out of his Lordship's body, than I was required by the executors to give up those very letters ; and, on pain of refusal, an injunction was threatened in the Court of Chancery, to prohibit my publishing the Naval History, the two first volumes of which were then not only before the world, with some of Lord St. Vincent's letters in them, but his Lordship had actually read and approved of them, and, as I shall soon show, commented on the work, and had taken a great interest in it. I therefore replied, in the most decided and peremptory manner, that I would not give them up ; and in the course of a few days I received official notice that an injunction was prayed for. The case came on late on a Friday, and my answer was directed to be put in on the Monday following ; a very unfair advantage was thus taken of me. My Chancery solicitor was Mr. Winbourn, and, with the able assistance of my active young friend, Mr. Alexander William Grant, now of the firm of Walker, Grant, and Pugh, I was enabled to face my enemies. My affidavits were fully prepared. The Attorney General, (the late Lord Giffard) Mr. Beames, and Mr. (now Sir Charles) Wetherel, were retained for me.

The affidavits exhibited by my persecutors were not founded in fact. They stated that my sister and myself had surreptitiously, or by unfair means, obtained access to the muniment room of Lord St. Vincent, and copied the letters without permission. But when Lord Giffard held my letter-book in his hand, and showed them the express written permission of Lord St. Vincent to make copies and extracts, they were utterly confounded. They then attempted to avail themselves of the Admiralty letters and orders not being expressly included in the permission ; but this was overruled, the indulgence being considered as general and unrestricted. The depositions of my sister, Miss Brenton, entirely refuted the assertions of the executors as to the clandestine copying, and my brother, Sir Jahleel Brenton, deposed that Lord St. Vincent had told him that he had not only given me leave to copy his letters, but also that

When I subsequently accompanied Lord St. Vincent to the south of France, I asked him whether he would approve of my writing his life, if I should survive him. He replied, "I am very much obliged to you, but Tucker is to do it." From that moment I gave up all thoughts of the present undertaking, and only published such letters in the Naval History as I deemed pertinent to the subject in hand ; nor did I contemplate ever doing more, until I found that, if I did not, the public would probably be deprived altogether of an authentic biography of my distinguished friend.

About seven years after the death of the Earl, I received a letter from Viscount St. Vincent, requesting me to lend him my papers, for the purpose of getting the life of his uncle written. To this request I immediately assented, and forwarded to the Viscount every letter I had ever copied, together with all my papers, private memorandum books, and even the papers relative to the Chancery suit. I also made, at the same time, an unconditional offer of the use of the plate

if he had thought I would not publish them, I should not have had such permission at all. This was sufficient : all the counter-statements went for nothing. Lord Giffard told my opponents very plainly that they had not a leg to stand on, and that the sooner they got out of court the better. They in consequence prayed to have their own bill dismissed with costs, and their prayer was granted. Thus my Chancery suit, which began on Friday, ended on the Thursday following, without costing me a sixpence.

engraved by Turner, from the picture of the Earl by Carbonnier.

After this statement, I shall scarcely be accused of selfish motives in refusing to part with the documents in question in the first instance. In fact, though I refused to part with the letters when they were attempted to be wrested from me by force, I gave them up without hesitation to a gentlemanly request, and a promise that they should be returned when applied to the purpose for which I had intended them.

The lapse of another seven years took place ; no life of the Earl appeared ; and—Tucker was dead. In the mean time I had heard that Lord Brougham was entrusted with the work, and I therefore wrote to his lordship, requesting to know if he had any intention of proceeding with it ; adding that if he had no intention of doing so, I should certainly take the work in hand myself. His lordship's answer was kind and candid. He admitted that it had been his intention to write the life of the Earl ; but that circumstances had hitherto prevented it ; that he had not wholly relinquished the idea of writing the work, but begged he might not prevent my doing it ; and he concluded by expressing a wish that I should not hurry it—as I had mentioned my intention of bringing it out in six months from the date of my letter.

About the same time, I wrote to the Viscount St. Vincent, requesting to have my papers returned to me ; which his lordship did, with as little delay as possible. Having thus regained possession of the most material documents connected with my purpose, I prepared in good earnest to go to work ; but before I actually commenced the life, I addressed a second letter to Lord Brougham, which I myself left at his house in Berkeley Square. In that letter I distinctly stated, that if his lordship would say he had any intention of writing the life of the Earl of St. Vincent, I would wholly abandon my intention of doing so.

To this last letter I never received any answer. Having thus, as I considered, done all which delicacy and honour required of me, I undertook to write the life of the Earl of St. Vincent, under the firm conviction that, in default of my doing so, his character and actions, and the influence which they exercised on the condition and history of his profession and his country, would remain unrecorded.

I will only add here, that, in fulfilling my task, I have avoided as much as possible trenching on private matters, or wounding personal feeling. But, where the parties have been long dead, I have considered the subject matter as

national property, and where the character of the Earl of St. Vincent has been implicated, either by direct charges or by insinuation, I have vindicated the one, and rebutted the other, to the best of my ability and means.

I now venture before the public and my own profession, as the biographer and historian of one of our greatest admirals and statesmen ; and, if I make no pretensions to high literary rank, I at least may lay claim to that professional, local, and personal knowledge which in this instance I may hope will supply its place. I shall, at all events, conclude this part of my subject with a motto which Mr. Boswell found on the Palazzo Tolomei at Sienna :\*

“ Quod potui feci—faciant meliora potentes.”

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Perhaps the most brief and succinct form in which I can lay before the reader the information he will desire to receive, as to the extraction and family connections of Earl St. Vincent, will be that of a dry genealogical notice, which I offer accordingly as follows, chiefly from Debrett's Peerage :—

John Jervis, son and heir of John Jervis,

\* History of Corsica—Third Edition, 8vo. p. 41.



Esq., of Chalkyll, in the county of Stafford, married Mary, only daughter and heir of John Swynfen, Esq., of Swynfen in the same county, and had a large family, of which the fifth son,

Swynfen Jervis, Esq., of Meaford, barrister-at-law, was born in November, 1700, and married, 1727, to Elizabeth, daughter of George Parker, Esq., of Park Hall, in the county of Stafford, and sister to the Right Honourable Sir Thomas Parker, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, by whom he had issue—

1st. William, Gentleman Usher of the Privy Chamber, who married Jane, youngest daughter of Thomas Hatsell, Esq.

2nd. John, the hero of the following memoir.

3rd. Elizabeth, married to the Rev. Mr. Batwell.

4th. Mary, married to Wm. Henry Ricketts, Esq., bencher of Grays Inn, of Longwood, Hants, by whom she had issue—

1st. William Henry, a captain in the Royal Navy, drowned off Ushant by the upsetting of his boat, January 26th, 1805. This officer married the Lady Elizabeth Jane Lambert, daughter of the Earl of Cavan, by whom he had two daughters,

Martha Honora Georgina, who married, first, June 25th, 1822, Osborne Markham, Esq.,

son of the Archbishop of York, by whom she had one daughter, now living; he died in 1827. Secondly, July 2nd, 1834, Lieut.-General Sir William Cockburn, Bart., who died March 19th, 1835.

2nd.. Henrietta Elizabeth Mary, who married November 27th, 1817, Captain Edmund Palmer, of the Royal Navy, C. B., since dead, leaving a large family of children.

Lady Elizabeth Ricketts married, secondly, the Rev. Richard Brickenden, and died in 1830.

2nd. Edward Jervis Ricketts, the present Viscount St. Vincent.

3rd. Mary Ricketts, who married, in 1788, Captain William Carneggie, R.N., afterwards Earl of Northesk, a Vice-Admiral, and third officer in command at the celebrated battle of Trafalgar.

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John Jervis, the late Earl, and second son of Swynfen Jervis, Esq., of Meaford, was raised to the Peerage in 1797, by the titles of Baron Jervis of Meaford, in the county of Stafford, and Earl of St. Vincent, in consequence of the splendid victory he obtained over the Spanish fleet off Cape Vincent, in that year. In 1801, he was constituted first lord of the Admiralty, and

created Viscount St. Vincent, with remainder in default of male issue to his nephews, Mr. Henry Ricketts and Edward Jervis Ricketts, successively, and afterwards to the sister of those gentlemen, Mary, Countess of Northesk, and her male descendants.

The Earl married June 5th, 1783, Martha, daughter of the Lord Chief Baron Parker, his first cousin, by whom he had no issue: her ladyship died on the 8th of February, 1816. With the death of the Earl the Earldom and Barony became extinct, but the Viscounty devolved on his only surviving nephew, Edward Jervis Ricketts, the present peer.

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I was walking with the Earl one morning in the breakfast parlour at Rochetts, when, after we had conversed for some time on numerous professional topics, I took the opportunity of reminding him of his promise to relate to me some of his early history. His lordship, with his characteristic kindness and frankness, immediately replied: "Come, then, take your pen and sit down, and I will talk while you write." He then dictated to me as follows:

"I was born at Meaford, in Staffordshire, on the 9th of January, 1734, old style. My father was counsel and solicitor to the Admiralty, and

treasurer of Greenwich Hospital. At a very early age I was sent to a grammar school at Burton-upon-Trent, where I remained long enough to be considered a very capital Latin and Greek scholar for my years; and I was often selected by the master to show what proficiency his boys had attained. At the same time, I frankly own to you that I knew very little about the matter now.\* At the age of twelve years I was removed to a school at Greenwich, kept by a Mr. Swinton, and where I was to have remained until fitted for college, being destined for the law. This favourite plan of my father's was, however, frustrated by his own coachman, whose name I have now forgotten. I only remember that I gained his confidence, always sitting by his side on the coach-box when we drove out. He often asked what profession I intended to choose. I told him I was to be a lawyer. 'O don't be a lawyer, Master Jackey,' said the old man, 'all lawyers are rogues.'†

“About this time, young Strachan (father of

\* This avowal, I am however inclined to think, was more the effect of modesty than a real conviction of the fact.

† This often-repeated lesson appears to have made such an impression on the mind of “Master Jackey,” that I very much doubt whether to his last hour it was not the creed of the Earl of St. Vincent. Certain it is that from the time the old coachman uttered his anathema against the learned profession, young Jervis determined never to enter it.

the late Admiral Sir Richard Strachan, and son of Dr. Strachan, who lived at Greenwich) came to the same school, and we became great friends. He told me such stories of the happiness of a sea life, into which he had lately been initiated, that he easily persuaded me to quit the school, and go with him. We set out accordingly, and concealed ourselves on board of a ship at Woolwich. My father was at that time absent on the northern circuit. My mother and sisters were in a state of distraction at learning our absence from school, fearing that some disaster had happened to us. But, after keeping them for three days in the utmost anxiety, and suffering ourselves much privation and misery, we thought it best to return home. I went in at night and made myself known to my sisters, who remonstrated with me rather warmly on the impropriety of my conduct, and assured me that Mr. Swinton would chastise me severely for it; to which I replied that he certainly would not, for that I did not intend to go to school any more, and that I was resolved to be a sailor.

“The next day my mother spoke to me on the subject, and I still repeated that I would be a sailor. This threw her into much perplexity; and, in the absence of her husband, she made known her grief, in a flood of tears, to Lady

Archibald Hamilton, mother of the late Sir William Hamilton, and wife of the Governor of Greenwich Hospital. Her ladyship said she did not see the matter in the same light as my mother did — that she thought the sea a very honourable and a very good profession — and said she would undertake to procure me a situation in some ship of war.

“In the mean time, my mother sent for her brother, Mr. John Parker, who, on being made acquainted with my determination, expostulated with me, but to no purpose. I was resolved I would not be a lawyer, and that I would be a sailor. Shortly afterwards, Lady Archibald Hamilton introduced me to Lady Burlington, and she to Commodore Townshend, who was at that time going out in the Gloucester, as commander-in-chief, to Jamaica. She requested that he would take me on his quarter-deck, to which the commodore readily consented; and I was forthwith to be prepared for a sea life.

“My equipment was what would now be called rather grotesque. My coat was made for me to grow up to; it reached down to my heels, and was full large in the sleeves. I had a dirk, and a gold-laced hat; and in this costume my uncle caused me to be introduced to my patroness, Lady Burlington. Here I ac-

quitted myself but badly. I lagged behind my uncle, and held by the skirt of his coat. Her ladyship, however, insisted on my coming forward, shook hands with me, and told me I had chosen a very honourable profession. She then gave Mr. Parker a note to Commodore George Townshend, who lived in one of the small houses in Charles Street, Berkeley Square, desiring that we should call there early the next morning. This we did; and, after waiting some time, the commodore made his appearance in his night-cap and slippers, and in a very rough and uncouth voice asked me how soon I would be ready to join my ship? I replied 'directly.'\* 'Then you may go to-morrow morning,' said he, 'and I will give you a letter to the first lieutenant.'

"My uncle, Mr. Parker, however, replied that I could not be ready quite so soon, and we quitted the commodore. In a few days after this we set off; and my uncle took me to Mr. Blanchard, the master-attendant, or the boatswain, of the dock-yard, I forget which, and by him I was

\* It is curious to observe that this reply is common to every English boy who embraces our profession. The moment a ship is named, they all want to go on board "directly." This is the esprit de corps which carries them through such perilous adventures with cheerfulness and alacrity, to the very end of their lives.

taken on board the hulk, or receiving ship, the next morning ; the Gloucester being in dock at the time."

His lordship then gave me an account of the manner and circumstances of his introduction to the first lieutenant. These, were they to happen in our day, would amount to an utter disqualification ; and I should think that he would be immediately dismissed from his ship, if not from the service. I have too much respect for my readers to describe the scene which his lordship presented to me, in a very few words, but in his clear and emphatic manner. Suffice it to say, that, in point of gross immorality and vice, it equalled or outdid any thing described by Smollet, in his Roderick Random. The circumstance seemed to have produced the same effect on young Jervis's mind as the Spartans expected from exposing their drunken slaves.

His lordship continued as follows : " This was in the year 1748. As soon as the ship was ready for sea we proceeded to Jamaica, and, as I was always fond of an active life, I volunteered to go into small vessels, and saw a good deal of what was going on.

" My father had a very large family, with limited means. He gave me twenty pounds at starting, and that was all he ever gave me. After



I had been a considerable time at the station, I drew for twenty more, but the bill came back protested. I was mortified at this rebuke, and made a promise, which I have ever kept, that I never would draw another bill without a certainty of its being paid. I immediately changed my mode of living; quitted my mess, lived alone, and took up the ship's allowance, which I found quite sufficient; washed and mended my own clothes; made a pair of trowsers out of the ticking of my bed; and having by these means saved as much money as would redeem my honour, I took up my bill; and from that time to this [he said this with great energy] I have taken care to keep within my means."

Thus far am I indebted to Earl St. Vincent's own lips for the history of his early introduction to the service. I now proceed, from other sources.

In 1754, having completed his servitude, he was made a lieutenant out of the *Prince* into the *Royal Anne*; and in the year 1759, he was lieutenant of the *Namur*, with Sir Charles Saunders, at the siege and capture of Quebec, when General Wolfe was killed. He distinguished himself very much on that memorable occasion; and Sir Charles Saunders, the commander-in-chief, promoted him to the rank of commander, into the *Porcupine* sloop-of-war. In the follow-

ing year, 1760, he was made a post-captain, being the last promoted in that reign.

For the naval achievements of his lordship, then Captain Jervis, from the above period to the revolutionary war, I am indebted to Charnock, whose account is very meagre. He is also mistaken in saying that Captain Jervis was made post in 1759, as the Admiralty-list will show.

I never heard him speak much of his command of the Albany sloop, nor of his action with the Corsair, while commanding the Experiment. He was actively employed in the Gosport, of 44 guns, in which ship I have heard him say that the late Admiral Viscount Keith was one of his midshipmen.

In the year 1769, he was appointed to the Alarm, of 32 guns, and sent to the Mediterranean. This ship, his lordship told me, was the first that was ever copper-sheathed in our navy, although the French had adopted the plan some years before. A copper-bottomed frigate, in those days, must have been indeed an enviable command, as it was justly considered that the enemy, owing to this advantage, often out-sailed us, and got away. Yet I am not certain that the plan of coppering ships generally in the French navy was adopted until the peace of 1783; as I have a very credible Ms. which speaks of only

five sail of the line, out of forty-eight which comprised the combined fleet in 1782, having been coppered. This statement, I think, gives too small a number; but certainly many of them were not coppered.

While Captain Jervis was lying in the bay of Marseilles, in the Alarm, a gale of wind came on, which drove the ship from her anchors. She went on shore, and was supposed to be totally lost; but Captain Jervis would not give her up, and by dint of labour, seamanship, and perseverance, and with the assistance of the French, (with whom we were then at peace,) she was hove off, and towed into the port of Marseilles, where she received the necessary repair. The harbour-master was presented by the British government with a piece of plate, as a testimony of gratitude for the services he had afforded on the occasion.

When I was at Marseilles with his lordship in 1818, some of the old people remembered the above circumstance; and we learned that the family of the master-attendant had been robbed of the plate in the revolution.

I do not know of Captain Jervis commanding any ship between his command of the Alarm and his appointment to the Foudroyant, which took place in 1775, and in which he continued

till the peace of 1783, when that ship was paid off.

It was in the Foudroyant that the principal achievement of his early life first drew on him the public notice. That ship was attached to the channel fleet in July, 1778, when the memorable rencontre took place between Admiral Keppel and Count d'Orvilliers.

In that action the Foudroyant bore a very distinguished part; and I shall presently take a retrospect of the evidence given by Captain Jervis on the court-martial which ensued.

Speaking with the Earl, one day, of Lord Keppel's trial, he desired me to bring the minutes of the court-martial from the library, and read them to him, which I did, and listened to his remarks with great attention. He said, with reference to that trial, that he never liked Sir Hugh Palliser, and thought his conduct to Lord Keppel was the effect of envy alone. Keppel was a man of talent, but a decided Whig; Sir Hugh a Tory. I know not whether Captain Jervis had at that time taken any side in politics. I think he was rather of the school of Blake, who abstained from politics, and was devoted solely to the defence and glory of his country.

As there never was a question between two

officers which so completely absorbed the public mind in the metropolis as this court-martial did, I shall devote a chapter to it. Mobs collected, riots ensued, the windows of unpopular persons were broken. A lady of rank assured me that she actually saw Mr. Pitt himself break her windows. I doubted the fact, and am still sceptical ; but the assertion itself seems to show the violence of party-feeling at the time. The public indignation bore hard upon the party opposed to Lord Keppel ; and Captain Hood, who at that time commanded the *Robert*, of 74 guns, one of the ships in Lord Keppel's fleet, seems to have attracted a more than usual share of it to himself, in consequence of the alteration in his log-book. But there was much more importance attached to that act than it really deserved ; because, had it been done with a criminal intention, it could not have failed of being discovered and rendered abortive, and the character of the officer would have been for ever blasted with his contemporaries, which does not appear to have been the case. I shall, however, have something more to add on this subject as we proceed.

## CHAPTER II.

**Lord Keppel's action—Origin of the dispute between him and Sir Hugh Palliser—Unfair advantage taken by the latter as a Lord of the Admiralty—The trial takes place at the Government House in Portsmouth Garrison—Remarks on the removal of that building—The court meets on board a ship in Portsmouth harbour, and adjourns to the Government House on shore—Evidence of Captain Jervis—Observations on the conduct of the court as exhibited in the difference shown in their treatment of Lord Mulgrave and Captain Jervis—Captain Hood taking the leaf out of his Log-book, wrong but not criminal—Irregular and improper mode of keeping that record in the Navy—Suggestions for improving it—Letter to George Jackson, Esq.**

THE drawn battles between the British and French fleets off Ushant, in the summer of 1778, excited much murmuring and discontent throughout all parts of the country; and as nearly twenty years had elapsed since the execution of the unhappy Byng, the *vox populi* (which, though on some occasions it may be the voice of God, is in most the voice of the devil), grew clamorous for another sacrifice.

Sir Hugh Palliser was suspected of being the author of many anonymous letters and publications on this subject, the object of which was

to cast reflections on Lord Keppel; and the latter seems to have taken more notice of them than anonymous accusations usually deserve. Much hostile correspondence passed between the two admirals; and Sir Hugh, having the advantage over his adversary of being a lord of the Admiralty, availed himself of it, and had influence enough with the Earl of Sandwich, then first lord, to obtain an order to try Lord Keppel, his commander-in-chief, by a court-martial, for neglect of duty in presence of the enemy on the 27th and 28th of July. This step was highly resented by all the respectable flag-officers in the service, and a considerable number of them memorialised the king on the subject. But the trial, nevertheless, took place; indeed, it is probable that Lord Keppel was, under the circumstances, the first to urge it on.

The trial took place in what was called the Government-house, in Portsmouth garrison; it having been transferred thither from a ship of the line in Portsmouth harbour\*.

\* This house has been entirely removed since the conclusion of the late war. It was understood to be the intention of the government to have built one on the same spot, for the admiral commanding in chief; but the plan has been abandoned for one more economical, though certainly not to be compared with it in point of efficiency and the real interest of the naval service. That house commanded a complete view of Southampton Water, the Needles, Spithead, St. Helens, and as far eastward as Bognor Rocks. A more noble and commanding position

As Captain Jervis's evidence on this important and interesting case is at once illustrative of his own character, and gives the best account extant of the whole affair, I shall make no apology for giving it entire. The truth is that the fame and character of Lord St. Vincent depended almost as much on this trial as did those of Lord Keppel; and as on this occasion the former attached himself to the party and politics of his chief, so he adhered to them throughout the whole of his after-life.

The court first assembled in January, 1779, as I have said, on board of a ship of the line in Portsmouth harbour, whence it was adjourned to the Government house, where it met from day to day, until the final termination and finding of the sentence.

Of all the important moral lessons to be for a British admiral, or, shall I say, for a British monarch, could not be conceived; but "economy" has condemned the commander-in-chief to a smoky residence in the dock-yard, where, if the rear-admiral does his duty, the presence of the senior officer can not be required at all. Moreover, he is entirely out of sight of all that is passing in the busiest part of his command, where it might happen that his prompt orders would be of incalculable advantage to the service. This is the more to be lamented, as no expense has been spared to construct a beautiful residence at Devonport for the admiral, and one equally extravagant at Sheerness, where a house of less dimensions would have answered the purpose. The same money expended on the King's Bastion, or on the Parade at Portsmouth, which was lavished on the horrid neighbourhood of Blue Town, would have built a residence creditable and useful to the country.



learned in our service, none in my mind exceed those which are to be acquired by an attentive listener at a court-martial. It has been my fortune to attend many of the most important of these trials during the late war, and to have read the proceedings of many others with great interest. In looking over this of Lord Keppel's, I could not help being struck with the inconsistency, and, I should say, great impropriety, of the court, in calling upon Lord Mulgrave to give *his opinion* on certain facts in the action in question, which he, as captain of the *Courageux*, must have been a witness to. His lordship very properly declined giving any opinion. He said that his opinion might be right, or it might be wrong, and that in giving it he might perhaps be pronouncing censure where it was not deserved ; but that at all events his opinion was *his own*, and he would *not* give it ; he was ready to state *facts* as far as he knew them. It is difficult to regard this as other than just and honourable conduct ; but the court thought differently, and very seriously and harshly rebuked the noble lord for his pertinacity.

Captain Jervis, on the other hand, pursued a different line of conduct, and one which he was equally justified in adopting : he gave his opinion when *asked* to do so. Now, though I

hold it highly improper to intrude or volunteer an opinion, unasked, before a court-martial, yet, as it ought not to be wrested from a witness by force, he may yield it to solicitation. We find, however, that the same court which reprimanded Lord Mulgrave for withholding his opinion, afterwards told Captain Jervis (*vide* Question 82) that he need not answer the question unless he pleased, "as it was a matter of opinion!"

Before proceeding to give Captain Jervis's evidence on this trial, I will premise, in favour of Captain Hood, (afterwards Lord Bridport) that, however I may have regretted his altering his log-book, nothing could induce me to think he had done so with a criminal or improper intention; for he must have known that the fraud would necessarily be discovered, and that he would then put himself in the power of the master, and of every officer in the ship. Yet he was sharply reproached for it, as if he had been guilty of the most atrocious violation of the laws of the service, as well as those of honour. Had such really been the case, he would have been brought to a court-martial himself, and most probably for ever disgraced; nor was there wanting the disposition to do this, if it could have been done with any hope of success. I am ready to admit that there was great want of discretion, in

the act, but I cannot think there was any criminal intention. The loss of the *Arethusa's* signal-log was a far more questionable matter: that book was stolen from the officer who had charge of it, and was never afterwards found \*.

The reader will not fail to remark that the evidence given by Captain Jervis, on the trial in question, was straightforward, clear, and manly; and neither the court nor the prosecutor could detect the most trifling error in his account of the transaction; and there can be no doubt it decided the court in the verdict of honourable acquittal which it pronounced on Lord Keppel. Sir Hugh Palliser, his accuser, was afterwards tried, and acquitted also.

I entered the service ten years after this remarkable trial; and it was even then, and for years afterwards, the common topic of conversation in every department of the naval service. It also afforded much useful instruction to our officers; and its good effects were seen in the battles of the 12th of April, 1782, and the 1st of June, 1794.

\* I may here observe that it might obviate any future difficulty of this kind if printed log-books were issued, bound, numbered, and paged, in one regular form, under the stamp and seal of the Admiralty. Certain it is, that, as books of reference or authority, they were quite undeserving of notice in my early days. They were afterwards, I am aware, greatly improved; but unless printed in due form by the Admi-

EVIDENCE GIVEN BY CAPT. JOHN JERVIS IN THE TRIAL  
OF ADMIRAL THE HON. AUGUSTUS KEPPEL.

1 Q. *By the prisoner.* From my first seeing the French fleet to the time of their being brought to battle, did they show any intention of coming to action, or did they always avoid it?

A. On the 23d of July, in the afternoon, when the French fleet was first discovered by the English fleet, I did think they showed a disposition to give battle; from the 24th, in the morning, as soon as they discovered the force of the English fleet, I am convinced they never did design to give battle.

2 Q. Did I use my utmost endeavours, as an

ralty *only*, the pages numbered, the books strongly bound, and each officer (from a rated midshipman to the captain) *compelled* to keep them, and made accountable for any deficiency in them, I should not be disposed to think much better of this species of public naval record than I have hitherto done. Censure or praise, reward or degradation, should invariably attend any examination of them, where the one or the other appeared to be merited. I have known a young man who had passed for a lieutenant note down in his journal, for the transactions of a sabbath day, "Parson employed preaching;" and I have seen whole months filled up with the words, "*Ditto* weather," now and then varied with, "Opened a cask of beef," &c. In a service like our's, when not a day passes over our heads without something novel that must strike the most careless observer, it is surely inexcusable neglect not to mark down every thing that occurs; but, in the presence of an enemy's fleet, a young officer who would not take the trouble to make observations, and commit them to paper while fresh on his memory, proves himself, in my opinion, quite unfit for his profession. Let it be remembered that Howe, and Nelson, and Jervis, and many other great men, never omitted this practice.

officer, to bring them to action, from the morning of the 24th till they were brought to action?

A. You used the most unremitting endeavours.

3 Q. Had you commanded a British fleet in the situation the French fleet was, with respect to the fleet under my command during the 24th, 25th, and 26th of July, would you have hesitated a moment to have led it down to battle, on account of the wind or weather, on any part of those days?

A. Any officer who had hesitated a moment would have been unworthy of command in the British fleet.

4 Q. Do you remember the signal being made early in the morning of the 27th July for several of the ships of the vice-admiral of the Blue's division to chase to windward?

A. I do.

5 Q. Was there at that time any greater indication of the French fleet's designing to come to action than on the preceding day?

A. There was not.

6 Q. What was the position of the vice-admiral of the Blue and his division at that time?

A. To the best of my recollection, the vice-admiral of the Blue, in the Formidable, was on

the lee-bow of the *Foudroyant*, at the distance of three miles and a half, or thereabouts.

7 Q. What, in your judgment, was the object of that signal? and do you think it a proper one under the circumstances in which it was made?

A. I reflected on the signal when it was made, so that I have no sort of doubt in answering the question. I observed at the time that it must have been made to combine the division of the vice-admiral of the Blue with the centre division.

8 Q. What, in your opinion, would have been the consequence if I had formed the line of battle early in the morning, instead of bringing up the leewardmost ships by signal to chase?

A. I am clearly of opinion that you would not have brought the French fleet to action on that day.

9 Q. Did you see the French fleet upon the larboard-tack just before the action began?

A. I did.

10 Q. Was not our getting into action with the enemy very sudden and unexpected, from the shift of wind?

A. That was the principal event which produced it.

11 Q. What would have been the conse-

quence if I had formed the line of battle at that time?

A. You would have given an opportunity for the enemy, when they were in great disorder, to have got into some form, and thereby subjected your fleet to an attack before it could have been got into order, or given the French time to escape out of gunshot if they had been disposed to do so.

12 Q. As I am charged with having advanced to the enemy, and made the signal for battle without having formed the line, I desire you will inform the Court if you think I was justifiable in doing so under the circumstances you have stated.

A. To the best of my judgment and ability, you certainly was.

13 Q. I am charged with having stood to a great distance beyond the enemy, before I wore to stand towards them again—I desire to know if the fact be true.

A. It is not true.

14 Q. Did I make the signal for the line of battle as soon as I wore\*.

A. You did.

\* To wear, preterit, wore—to turn a ship's head from the wind, and thus alter her course to any other point of the compass, or to sail on the opposite tack.

15 Q. Was that the properest signal I could make to collect the fleet together?

A. It was the properest signal, and the signal that required the most prompt obedience.

16 Q. I am charged with having shortened sail instead of having advanced to the enemy. I desire you will acquaint the Court whether I had a sufficient force collected to admit of my advancing faster than I did.

A. To the best of my recollection, when I approached you on the larboard-tack, a little before three o'clock, you had not more than two or three ships near you of your own division; the rest were at a considerable distance astern.

17 Q. Had I at any time, while I stood on the larboard-tack, a sufficient force collected near me to renew the fight?

A. You had not.

18 Q. Did you see the French fleet wear, and begin to form the line on the larboard-tack?

A. I did.

19 Q. Had I at that time a sufficient force collected to prevent their forming?

A. You had not the means, in any sort.

20 Q. I am charged with having wore at this time, and led the British fleet directly from the enemy. I desire you will explain this matter to the Court?



A. It appeared to me at the time that you had two great objects in view in wearing the British fleet and standing as you did: the first and principal was to cover four or five disabled ships of your fleet in the S.S.E.; the other to give the opportunity to the vice-admiral of the Blue (*Sir H. Palliser*) and his division to form in their stations astern of you.

21 Q. Did I make every necessary signal to form the line, and to assemble the fleet on the starboard-tack?

A. I do not know a signal you could have made which you did not make to produce that effect.

22 Q. What sail did I carry during the afternoon?

A. To the best of my recollection, you carried your double-reefed topsails and foresail, the latter much shot, as well as the foretop-sail.

23 Q. Was not the sail I carried necessary for the protection of the disabled ships, and could the degree of sail I did carry possibly have prevented the vice-admiral of the Blue from coming into the line?

A. The sail you carried appeared to me well-proportioned to effect both those purposes.

24 Q. Did not the sail I carried permit the

French to range up with me under their top-sails ?

A. It did.

25 Q. Had this evolution, or my subsequent conduct, as you have stated it, the least appearance of a flight ?

A. Very much otherwise.

26 Q. Could the French fleet have attacked the British fleet at any time they had thought proper during the afternoon ?

A. They could, and at some periods of the afternoon with very great advantage.

27 Q. Where was your station in the line of battle ahead on the starboard-tack ?

A. The next to, and astern of, the Victory.

28 Q. When did you get into it, and did you preserve it ?

A. I got into it as you wore, at or about three o'clock in the afternoon, and never was out of it till four o'clock the next morning.

29 Q. Did you think I intended to renew the battle if I could have formed the line ?

A. I did ; and as a proof of it, I turned my people up, thinking it advisable to say a few animating words to them.

30\* Q. What prevented my forming the line ?

\* The answer to this question bore very hard upon Sir Hugh Palliser, whose flag was flying on board the Formidable ; see also answers to 35, 66, and 68, which I conclude led to *his* court-martial.

A. The vice-admiral of the Blue not leading his division down into his station.

31 Q. Was he in a situation to have led his division down into the line ?

A. He appeared so to me.

32 Q. Did any thing appear to you to prevent his bearing down ?

A. There was nothing visible to me but a foretop-sail unbent.

33 Q. How long did you observe the Formidable's foretop-sail unbent ?

A. To the best of my recollection, it was near four hours unbent ; I cannot speak positively to time ; it appeared to me the greatest part of the afternoon, after we were on the starboard-tack.

34 Q. *By the Court.* Could he have got into his station under his maintop-sail and fore-sail ?

A. I believe he could.

35 Q. How many points might he have kept away ?

A. About four points, I think ; he appeared to me to be always in the wind's eye of his station.

36 Q. *By the prisoner.* Did the vice-admiral of the Blue ever make any signal to inform the admiral that he was disabled ?

A. I never saw any such signal.

37 Q. Did you ever see him repeat the signal for the line of battle?

A. I did not.

38 Q. What sail did you carry on the night of the 27th to keep your station?

A. We had double-reefed topsails, pretty much shot, so as to make it dangerous to hoist them taut up; I think there was a reef at least wanting of the hoist; and I do not recollect any other sail but a forestay-sail bent for a mizen; the maintop-sail was frequently aback, that we might keep astern of the Victory; and a very difficult operation it was to preserve that line.

39 Q. You have mentioned your forestay sail bent for a mizen—was your mizen-mast damaged?

A. The mizen-mast head had been shot away just under the cap; the mizen-yard had been also shot away, that is to say, divided.

40 Q. Have you got the bearings and distance from Ushant on the 28th?

A. I cannot speak to them from memory; they are in the log-book, I believe (*looked into the log-book*); on the 28th, Ushant bore N. 79, E. 21 leagues, by the log, that day.

41 Q. Your station being nearest me during the pursuit of the enemy, and after the action,

which gave you an opportunity of observing my conduct, and of seeing objects nearly in the same point of view with myself, I desire you will acquaint the Court of any instance, if you saw and know of any such, in which I negligently performed any part of my duty on the 27th and 28th of July.

A. With great respect to you, and great deference to the Court, I hope I shall be indulged by having that question put by the Court.

*The question was altered, and put by the Court as follows :*

42 Q. Your station being nearest the admiral during the pursuit of the enemy, and after the action, which gave you an opportunity of observing the admiral's conduct, and of seeing objects nearly in the same point of view with himself, acquaint the Court of any instance, if you saw any such, in which the admiral negligently performed any part of his duty on the 27th and 28th of July.

A. I feel myself bound by the oath I have taken to answer that question ; I believe it to be consonant to the general practice of sea courts-martial. I cannot boast a long acquaintance with Admiral Keppel ; I never had the honour to serve under him before ; but I am happy in this

opportunity to declare to this Court, and to the whole world, that, during the whole time the English fleet was in sight of the French fleet, he displayed the greatest naval skill and ability, and the boldest enterprise, on the 27th July, which, with the promptitude and obedience of Vice-Admiral Sir Robert Harland, will be subjects of my admiration and of my imitation as long as I live.

43 Q. *By the Court.* Relate to the Court the defects of your masts, sails, and rigging, after you came out of action.

A. The main-mast had one shot very near through the head of it, between the catharpings and the hounds; it entered on the starboard side, and pierced one of the cheeks of the mast, went through the heart of the mast, and lodged in the other cheek; several other shot in the main-mast, but not of so much consequence as that I have mentioned. The fore-mast had two or three shot in it; the bowsprit had an excavation on the lower side of it — to the best of my recollection, about nine inches diameter of the lower side of the bowsprit shot away. The foretop-mast was so much wounded as to oblige us to reef it; the mizen-mast was totally disabled, which was of very little consequence to the Foudroyant; the running rigging was, I

believe, every rope of it cut, some in two or three places ; the shrouds were in a great measure demolished ; there was no brace or bowline left in the ship — there was scarce a haul-yard ; the forestay, topmast-stays, and topmast spring stays, topsails, and haulyards ; the sails were very much shattered, particularly the topsails.

It being three o'clock, the Court adjourned till ten the next day, February 6, 1779, when the Court again met, and Captain Jervis's examination was proceeded with.

44 Q. *By the prisoner.* Did you see the French fleet on the 28th of July in the morning ?

A. I did not see the French fleet ; I saw three sail of the French fleet, and some time afterwards the man at the mast head said he saw eight sail in the S.E.

45 Q. Did you see any signal made to chase the three French ships ?

A. To the best of my recollection, I saw the signal made for three sail to chase to the N.E.

46 Q. Was your ship in a condition to have chased ?

A. She was not.

47 Q. If I had chased towards Ushant, in the condition the fleet were in as to their masts and yards from the action of the 27th, was there any

probability of our coming up with the fleet of France before they reached the port of Brest ?

A. There certainly was not the smallest probability.

The prisoner had no farther questions to ask of the witness.

48 Q. *By the prosecutor.* I think you said, on your examination yesterday, that, on the morning of the 27th, the French showed no more disposition for engaging than on the preceding days. I would ask, if that appeared so to you, why did you think it necessary to take seven of the vice-admiral of the Blue's division from him to combine them with the centre on that day any more than on any other day ?

A. I have stated, in my answer to that question, that the vice-admiral of the Blue and his division were three miles and a half to leeward of the Foudroyant ; which would give them, I believe, three miles to leeward of the Victory ; they were under a very low sail, the Formidable with her main-sail up, and, to the best of my recollection, *going still farther to leeward* ; and it was absolutely necessary, in my opinion, they should make sail to get to windward. I would add, that, in my judgment, and I believe I made an observation upon it at the time, the vice-admiral of the Blue accepted the meaning



of the signal ; for he certainly did make a considerable deal of sail very soon after those ships had made sail in obedience to the signal.

49 Q. If my memory does not deceive me, you alter your account of the position of the vice-admiral of the Blue *very different* from what you stated it yesterday. If I do not mistake, you then stated the Formidable was upon the Foudroyant's lee-bow three miles' distance ; now you convey an idea of her being wholly to leeward, three miles' distance.

A. I do not mean to quibble about an idea, or to convey any thing that was not exactly so. When I said on the lee-bow, I did not say upon what point of the lee-bow ; it is a very common expression ; but, to the best of my judgment, I was very near the beam of the Victory ; I was abaft the beam, but not much. I do not mean, I am sure, to take any advantage of you, or to say any thing in favour of the admiral that was not true. All I wish, by the answer I have given, is to convey to the Court that the *Formidable was much farther to leeward than her station in the order of sailing prescribes* ; and that is perfectly my idea.

50 Q. If those ships had been permitted to remain with their proper admiral, might they not have gone into action with him as he did,

and in the same place where the commander-in-chief began action ?

A. I see no reason why they should not ; but I am not a competent judge of that part of the fleet ; and I must beg leave to state the cause that brought the fleet into action at all, which cause did not exist when those ships chased. To make it as accurate as possible, I would wish to fix it, as was really the fact, upon a material shift of wind in our favour, which shift of wind did not happen, I believe, for four hours after those ships chased.

51 Q. Look at your log-book, and inform the Court how much the wind shifted between six and ten o'clock that morning.

*(Captain Jervis looked at his log-book.)*

A. The wind shifted one point at eight o'clock, and between eight and twelve o'clock it shifted two points in favour of the fleet ; the wind stands at S.W. at eight, and at twelve it stands at W.S.W. But I do not suppose a very great stress will be laid upon a shift of wind while we were in action. It stands so here, but I have never looked into the log-book since the day of action until now. A great deal was due to an evolution performed very successfully, and much beyond my expectations, which was that of tacking the fleet together. We continually

looked up, after we were about, for the French fleet, and continued looking better and better for them.

52 Q. *By the Court.* You speak here, upon your oath, from your own knowledge?

A. Yes, I have nothing to do with the log-book. I speak not from that, or from any minutes; I govern myself by the effect of the wind on the ship, and not the point itself. I cannot speak to any point, nor will I. I do not speak to the points of the wind or compass at this distance of time. I do not refresh my memory by log-books or any other minutes, for I have looked at none. I pay no regard whatever to it, though I would not have *a log-book under me altered upon any consideration on earth*. Yet I do not pay much faith to a log-book taken at such a time, because, where officers are attentive to an enemy and to the commander-in-chief, they do not put down every shift of wind, except accurate persons are appointed for that purpose alone.

53 Q. Did you ever know or ever hear of a commander of the third post in a fleet to have his ships drafted from him, and he left to go into action without being supported by the ships of his own division?

A. Before I answer that question, I beg to observe, that I do not know that such a fact

existed on the 27th of July. I certainly never did hear of such a thing ; but I would have it understood I do not admit the fact to be so.

54 Q. Whether the French fleet's manœuvre in wearing did not contribute to bring them to leeward, and occasion the British fleet to lie better up with them than if they had not done so ?

A. I must beg you will fix the period of wearing.

55 Q. If they wore at any time before the time of coming into action ?

A. I saw them between 8 and 10 in the operation of wearing, and they certainly did fall to leeward ; the circle described in wearing must have brought them further to leeward than they were before—there is no doubt of it.

56 Q. *By the Court.* Notwithstanding that, could you have fetched the van of the fleet at the time you came into action ?

A. No, not in the Foudroyant.

57 Q. *By the Prosecutor.* There was another manœuvre of the French fleet—what was it ?

A. That manœuvre was very much obscured by thick weather ; but, to the best of my belief and judgment, it was an attempt to perform the same evolution they had observed successfully performed by our fleet, with an attempt

to pass us to windward, and to avoid an action. That is my belief; several of them did stay, others missed stays,\* and to that I ascribe the confusion and disorder I saw them in.

58 Q. In a distant view of a fleet changing their positions from one tack to the other, does it not naturally give an appearance of confusion?—they may be performing their evolutions successively in the wake of each other, part standing one way and part another.

A. It unquestionably does; but the disorder in part of the centre and rear did continue until the centre and rear of the fleet had passed me, during the whole time I was in action with them. I do not speak to the confusion, but the disorder certainly did continue, for they were in no line.

59 Q. Can you say, whilst the French were upon the starboard-tack after having wore as you have described, whether, during the time they were upon that tack, they did not lead large.†

A. I do not recollect that I saw the fleet lead large, after the whole were wore.

\* “Staying” means, turning the ship’s head in an opposite direction, by going round head to wind, as wearing is going round from the wind. To miss stays, is to fail in attempting to tack.

† To “lead large,” means, to run off the wind, or to make a fair wind by no longer keeping within 6 points of it.

60 Q. If the rear division of the vice-admiral of the Blue had remained together, and engaged in like manner, in a connected body, with their own admiral, as the other divisions of the admirals of the fleet did, would they not have supported each other, have done more execution, and have suffered less, than by engaging singly and separately?

A. I do not know that any part of the question did really exist.

61 Q. Whether the ships which chased by signal were not by that means separated at a distance from their admiral, and at a distance from each other, different from what they were before?

A. I did not know it existed at the time the vice-admiral of the Blue came into action; I was otherways too much employed: I was very attentive to my own business.

62 Q. After the action was over, and the admiral had laid his head to the northward again, what was the situation of the Red division at the time the admiral wore round the second time?

A. In the Foudroyant, I weathered a great part of the vice-admiral of the Red division. When I say that, I mean four or five sail. I was covetous of the wind, because, disabled as I

then was, I conceived the advantage of the wind only could carry me again into action. When I approached the admiral upon the larboard tack, which, to the best of my recollection, was about three o'clock, and I had then got upon his weather beam, I observed the vice-admiral of the Red with a part of his division upon *my* weather beam, or thereabouts, to the best of my recollection; but I cannot speak positively to the precise point of the compass, or the angle of the ship. They were to windward of me.

63 Q. *By the Prosecutor.* Were they ahead, withal?

A. I cannot say they were ahead of me, but I do not think they were ahead of the Victory; if they were, it was very little; but these particular circumstances, the distance of time being so very great, I cannot recollect. There were some things struck me very forcibly, which I do recollect; but there are many others my memory does not go to by any means, and I little expected to be called upon the occasion, or I might have remembered them better.

64 Q. You stated in your examination yesterday, whilst the admiral was standing towards the enemy, on the larboard tack, that he never had a collected force proper to advance

with—that none of the ships took their stations in the line of battle—that the admiral made the signal for collecting the ships, which was the signal for the line. If, whilst the admiral was upon that tack, did he ever make the signal for ships to windward to bear down, or for any particular ship to make more sail, or the signal for observing any particular ships to be out of their stations ?

A. I did not see those signals made which the vice-admiral of the Blue alludes to, while we were on the larboard tack: if they had been made, very few ships could have obeyed them; I am sure I could not.

65.Q. I think you said you saw the French wear and stand to the southward. Can you give any reason why it was necessary to require an exact line of battle for advancing and attacking the enemy at that time, more than was requisite in the morning ?

A. The Admiral is charged with not having collected his ships together, and not keeping so near the enemy as to renew the battle so soon as might be proper. In reply to that part of the charge, I say the Admiral made the signal for the line of battle, which in my judgment was the properest signal for calling the ships together, for the purpose of renewing



the action, or for any other purpose of conducting the fleet down to the enemy at that time, disabled as the fleet then was.

66 Q. Am I to understand from your account in general, that the condition of the fleet was such, that it was not proper to face the enemy, and renew the attack when they stood towards us, before they formed into a line ?

A. *The fact is, we did face the enemy.*

67 Q. But whilst they were facing us, did not our fleet wear, and stand the other way ?

A. We wore certainly : I described the object of that yesterday.

68 Q. Did you ever know or hear of a British fleet turning their sterns upon an enemy of equal or inferior force, that enemy standing towards them, immediately after having engaged them ?

A. *I deny the fact in all its extent and meaning.*

69 Q. You have said that whilst the English fleet was standing to the southward, the French could have fetched and attacked them. In that case, were not our sterns towards them ?

A. I answered to the whole of this yesterday ; I explained the whole manœuvre, in answer to a question put by the admiral, and I shall not explain farther unless the Court require it.

70 Q. In an answer you gave yesterday, you mentioned the fleet edging down to four or five crippled ships: were not three of those ships of my division?

A. I did not know at that time what ships they were.

71 Q. You said, yesterday, that the sail the admiral carried during the afternoon could not prevent the vice-admiral of the Blue keeping up with him and keeping his station. Do you know whether the distance you have stated the Formidable to have been at, of three miles, was occasioned by any neglect of the Formidable, in not keeping up with the admiral?

A. I have not stated any such thing, neither the first part nor the latter. There was no distance specified in the afternoon, nor is the first part rightly stated.

72 Q. Did you know the particular condition of the Formidable at that time?

A. I never pretended to any such knowledge.

73 Q. When did the Red division quit the station of the vice-admiral of the Blue?

A. They were never in it; I mean, in the afternoon.

74 Q. Were not they nearly so?

A. No, by no manner of means.

75 Q. Whereabouts was you during the afternoon—ahead or astern of the admiral?

A. Astern of the Victory, in my station, which I never quitted for a moment.

76 Q. Did not the Red division form astern of the admiral?

A. The greatest part of the Red division did—a considerable distance astern of the Foudroyant.

77 Q. What time did they quit that station?

A. To the best of my recollection—I cannot speak positively to time—about five o'clock.

78 Q. Was not the vice-admiral of the Blue, and the ships of his division, the last that came out of action?

A. They certainly were: they must have been, from their situation.

79 Q. Have not you understood that they suffered more than the ships of the other division?

A. It did not appear to me that they had suffered more than many ships of the centre division; the Formidable certainly did appear to have suffered very much; but I conceive the ship I commanded suffered as much as any ship in the fleet in every sense, except in killed and wounded, which I am happy did not happen.

80 Q. Was not the Red division the first

part of the fleet that came out of action ; consequently, had been the longest out in the evening ?

A. Yes, I believe so.

81 Q. Are the sailing and fighting instructions you receive signed by the commander-in-chief, or are they signed by the flag officers of the separate division ?

A. I never was of any division but that of the commander-in-chief.

*The Court.* This being new matter, it is not proper for cross-examination.

82 Q. You have said you did not see the signal for the line repeated on board the *Formidable*. Was not the signal which was flying on board the commander-in-chief a sufficient warrant for every ship to take her situation when they were able to do so ?

A. I must beg the interposition of the Court upon this question, for this is leading me to reflect upon the conduct of the captain of the vice-admiral of the Blue's division, whom I have the highest opinion of.

The Court said — you need not answer it, as it is matter of opinion.

A. I do not see any other application it will bear.

83 Q. No such application was meant, for

the following question would have been put—whether they could take their stations, while they were occupied by other ships ?

A. I have already denied that fact.

84 Q. You have been asked whether you saw the vice-admiral of the Blue make any signal of distress. I should be glad to understand what signal of distress it is supposed was applicable at that time.

A. Though I am not accountable for the questions that have been asked, I will repeat, I did not know the particular station\* of the Formidable, and never pretended to any such knowledge.

85 Q. *By the Court.* Was the weather such that a boat could pass from one ship to another, without danger at that time ?

A. The best proof of it is that our long boat was floating between the enemy's fleet and our own, without any body to guide her; but it was certainly weather that any boat might have lived in.

86 Q. *By the Prosecutor.* You said you kept close to the Victory the whole afternoon ?

A. From three o'clock, from the time the admiral wore.

\* It is supposed the word "station" has here been inserted in the original by mistake for "situation."—ED.

87 Q. Then, of course, your rates of going were the same ?

A. Undoubtedly, they must have been.

88 Q. Were you fired into by the Duke, or any other British ship, during the engagement on that day ?

A. I never knew that the Duke fired a shot that day, till several days after ; I do not believe that any ship fired into the Foudroyant but the French ; I never heard of a shot appearing on the larboard side, nor did I ever conceive that such a thing had happened.

89 Q. Were any men wounded or blown up by an explosion on board the Foudroyant ?

A. I did not know of any explosion till the action was over. The lieutenant who commanded on one of the decks reported to me that a man had been killed in the act of putting a cartridge into the gun, and the cartridge went off ; it was a story I could not well account for. I believe we sent two men and a boy to the hospital who were blown up. Both the men recovered, and are now in the ship.

90 Q. *By the Court.* Inform the Court, in answer to part of the fourth and fifth articles of the charge, whether, to your knowledge, Admiral Keppel did any one act, between the

23rd and 29th of July, disgraceful to the British flag.

A. I have already answered that question very fully, in a reply I gave yesterday; but I am ready to say, I did not know any one instance in his conduct that was disgraceful to the British flag, and I do say it.

91 Q. Do you know of Admiral Keppel's having lost an opportunity, during the time before mentioned, of doing a most essential service to the state, and, by losing that opportunity, tarnishing the honour of the British flag.

A. I know of no such instance.

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I have been favoured with copies of the following letters, from Captain Jervis, written after the action, to his friend George Jackson, Esq., at that time second secretary of the Admiralty. I give them not only as illustrative of this interesting subject, but as showing that the mind of the writer was bent, upon all occasions, on a conscientious discharge of his duty. His attention was ever riveted to his profession; and it was this mode of thinking and acting, guided by a mind and a judgment at all times clear, firm, and vigorous, which con-

ducted Captain Jervis to the high honours he subsequently attained.

*Captain Jervis to George Jackson, Esq.*

Foudroyant, Plymouth Sound,

July 31, 1778.

My dear Jackson,

I do not agree with Goodall, that we have been outwitted. The French, I am convinced, never would have fought us, if they had not been surprised into it, by a sudden shift of wind; and, when they formed their inimitable line, after our brush, it was merely to cover their intention of flight. Four of our ships having got themselves to leeward so far as to be cut off by the enemy, if Admiral Keppel had not judiciously bore down to them; and the shattered state of Sir Hugh's, which disabled him from taking his place in the line; rendered it impossible to renew the attack on the evening of the 27th.

I have often told you that two fleets of equal force never can produce decisive events, unless they are equally determined to fight it out, or the commander-in-chief of one of them misconducts his line.

I perceive, it is the fashion of people to puff themselves, and no doubt you have seen, or will see, some of these accounts. For my part, I for-



bade the officers to write by the frigate that carried the despatches: I did not write a syllable myself, except touching my health, nor shall I, but to state the intrepidity of the officers and people under my command (through the most infernal fire I ever saw or heard of) to my Lord Sandwich, in which particular mention will be made of young Wells.

In justice to the Foudroyant, I must observe to you, that though she received the fire of seventeen sail, and had the Bretagne, Ville de Paris, and a 74 upon her at the same time, and appeared more disabled in her masts and rigging than any other ship, she was the first in the line of battle, and, really and truly, fitter for business in essentials (because the people were cool) than when she began. Keep this to yourself, unless you hear too much said in praise of others.

Your's, J. J.

*Captain Jervis to George Jackson, Esq.*

Plymouth Dock, Aug. 9th, 1778.

Since I sealed the enclosed, I am happy in your letter of the 5th. I am in hope what I have said of young Wells,\* to Lord S., will, in this

\* I am not able to say whether this refers to the gallant Admiral of the name, now on our list.—ED.

dearth of lieutenants, help to get over his time ; if it does not, I shall be very happy to have him continue with me.

The Prince George merits, by all accounts, all that can be said of her ; she, nor any other ship, was in the fire that the Foudroyant was. The Egmont suffered much from the Thunderer's firing into her, and from the America running on board of her in the night of the 27th. Jack Allen is a very gallant fellow, and will always be in the fire, if possible. I do not believe the attack could have been renewed to any effect the evening of the 27th. It was certainly intended by Admiral Keppel, who, when he found the Vice of the Blue and his division did not form the line with him, agreeable to the signal, sent Sir H. a message by a frigate to this effect : tell the Vice of the Blue, I only wait for his division to renew the attack. Neither the signal nor message was obeyed in any degree till it was too late, and the Formidable did not in view bear down at all. I conclude she was so disabled she could not. In that event, ought not the flag to have been shifted ? All this is mere chimera of my own, perhaps, for I have heard it from no one, nor do I believe there is the least coolness between the admirals.

Your letter has caused me to write more than I intended, but I have done it in full confidence that you will burn the letter instantly, and never utter the contents.

The Formidable suffered most from within the ship; and, I hear, several of Berwick's men were killed by the Vigilant. I do not vouch for the latter.

J. J.

## CHAPTER III.

**The capture of the Pegase by the Foudroyant—Particulars from Schomberg — Letters of Admiral Barrington and Captain Jervis — Comparison between the Foudroyant and the Cæsar much against British Shipwrights—The French and Spaniards a full century before us in 1793—Dimensions of the two ships—Foudroyant considered a crack ship — Anecdote of the French Captain of the Pegase — Envy of Naval Officers at the success of Sir John Jervis, who is created a Knight of the Bath—Returned Member of Parliament for Launceston — Hoists his broad pendant for a foreign command — Is prevented going by the Peace—He becomes a member of the Board of Officers for examining the best mode of fortifying the dock-yards — Opinion on the expediency of employing honest men in those places — Motto on the Coat of Arms —The various Promotions of Sir John Jervis — Remarks on the Promotion of young Officers during the Peace — Stimulus wanting — Other Navies arising.**

**BETWEEN the affair of Lord Keppel's action and the spring of 1782, we do not find that any particular naval incident occurred worth mentioning, in which Captain Jervis was concerned, until the action between the Foudroyant and the Pegase, a French ship of seventy-four guns, with a complement of seven hundred men, besides troops, on board.**

**Admiral Barrington, at that time, held the**

command off Brest, and Captain Jervis was placed under his orders. The friendship between these two officers was of long standing, and was, on every occasion, to the last hour of his life, acknowledged by Lord St. Vincent.

A squadron had long been preparing in Brest, with a view of making a dash to the East Indies ; and, of course, its intention was to run out in the night-time, or in thick weather, with a strong easterly wind. The Foudroyant, one of the fastest sailing ships of the British fleet, was in a position most likely to intercept the enemy ; and, when the latter made their appearance outside the harbour on the night of the 20th of April, 1782, Captain Jervis happily discovered them, brought one of the French ships to action, and took her, after a severe conflict carried on during the night. I find but little in Charnock on the subject of this action, but Schomberg makes up for the deficiency ; and I the more readily adopt his account, because he was a cotemporary, and actively employed at sea at the time, if not indeed in the same fleet. He says (vol. ii. p. 71.)—

“ On the 13th of April, Vice Admiral Barrington sailed from Spithead, on a cruise to the westward, with twelve sail of the line. At noon, the Artois made the signal for discovering, the

enemy's fleet, upon which Admiral Barrington instantly made the signal to chase. It was soon perceived that the enemy had seventeen or eighteen sail of merchantmen, under convoy of three ships of war. The Foudroyant being at a considerable distance ahead of the fleet, at about one o'clock the next morning brought the sternmost of the enemy's line-of-battle ships to close action, which continued near three quarters of an hour, when Captain Jervis laid her on board, and she surrendered, with the loss of eighty men, killed and wounded. She proved to be the Pegase, of seventy-four guns and seven hundred men, commanded by the Chevalier de Cillart. Soon after the action, her main and mizen masts fell overboard. Captain Jervis and four men only were wounded on board the Foudroyant."

It blew so hard, with a heavy sea, that it was with much difficulty the prize could be taken possession of, and a few of the prisoners taken out. At daylight the squadron was observed to be much dispersed. The Queen was ordered to the assistance of the Foudroyant, and took charge of the Pegase.

In speaking of this action, Admiral Barrington says, "My pen is not equal to the praise that is due to the good conduct, bravery, and discipline of Captain Jervis, his officers and

seamen, on this occasion. Let his own modest narrative speak for itself. It is as follows :

PROCEEDINGS OF HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP, FOUDROYANT,  
APRIL 19,\* 1782.

“ At sunset, I was near enough to discover that the enemy consisted of three or four ships of war, two of them of the line, and seventeen or eighteen sail under convoy, and that the latter dispersed by signal. At half-past nine, I observed the smallest of the ships of war to speak with the headmost, and then bear away; at a quarter past ten, the sternmost line-of-battle ship, perceiving that we came up with her very fast, bore up also. I pursued her; and, at forty-seven minutes past twelve, brought her to close action, which continued three quarters of an hour, when, having laid her on board on the larboard quarter, the French ship of war, Le Pegase, of seventy-four guns and seven hundred men, commanded by the Chevalier de Cillart, surrendered.

“ I am happy to inform you that only two or three people, with myself, are slightly wounded; but I learn from the Chevalier de Cillart that Le Pegase suffered very materially in masts and yards, her fore and mizen topmasts having gone away soon after the action.”

I have often wondered at the dogged obstinacy

\* Being P.M., it was *then* called the 20th by the log, as the nautical day began at noon.

of our Navy and Admiralty Boards in the olden time, and never could comprehend why they should so pertinaciously adhere to their mode of ship-building, which experience should have taught them was so defective as to make us the laughing-stock of our enemies. The Monmouth, it is true, a British ship of sixty-four guns, came up with her flying enemy, the Foudroyant, and brought her to action\*. After one of the best contended fights by single ships recorded in history, the enemy surrendered on the coming up of the Swiftsure, who fired one or two broadsides into her. The Foudroyant carried eighty guns and eight hundred men, commanded by Mons. Du Quesne, Chef d'Escadre, who presented his sword to the gallant Lieutenant Caskett, Captain Gardiner of the Monmouth having fallen in the action.

When the prize arrived at Gibraltar, her dimensions were taken, and were found as follows :

Comparative Dimensions of the Foudroyant, taken from the French, 28th February, 1758, and the Cæsar, built in England, in 1793.

	Foudroyant.	Cæsar.
Length, stem to stern . . . .	185 ft.	181 ft. 3 in.
Length of keel . . . . .	155	148 1
Breadth extreme . . . . .	50	50 5

The height of her lower deck ports, her depth of hold, and her tonnage, are not given ; but

\* See Beatson Mem. vol. ii. p. 153.



her weight of metal was 24-pounders on the main deck, and 42-pounders on the lower deck,\* French pounds, which are about two ounces heavier than our's. The Monmouth carried 12-pounders on her main deck, and 24-pounders below, with a complement short of five hundred men ; she therefore took a ship of nearly double her force. But when we compare the dimensions of this celebrated ship with those of the Cæsar, built at Plymouth dock forty years later, we shall find that, in the art of constructing ships of war, the French were a full century ahead of us—a very mortifying consideration. When I have pointed out this fact to our builders, they answered that we always contrived *to take* the French ships, although they did appear to be finer models than our own. Now this, even if it were true, is not an answer ; but the fact is otherwise : we do not always contrive to take them ; and the reverse is shown in all our actions of the seven years' war, the American war, and the war of the Revolution, when the fleets of our enemies, both French and Spanish, notoriously outsailed our's, and escaped. It is also well known that in almost every instance, when ships of war have been taken from

\* The Cæsar carried 24-pounders on her main deck, and 32-pounders on her lower deck. Long 42 pounders are too heavy for ship guns.

the enemy, they have become favourite ships in our service—witness the Foudroyant, Courageux, Gibraltar, Artois frigate, Santa Margareta, La Nymphe, Santa Leocadia, Belle Poule, Pomone, Revolutionnaire, &c. &c. ; and, finally, those *ne plus ultras* of naval construction, San Josef (Spanish), Tonnant, Malta, and Canopus (French), taken in 1797 and 1798. Even at this present day, the Foudroyant and the Gibraltar, although at sea eighty years ago, would be thought fine ships in the British navy.

I know not how the Foudroyant was employed between the time of her capture and the year 1775, when Captain Jervis was appointed to her. His obtaining the command of such a ship shows that he must have had very good interest. She was called the crack ship of the navy. Two officers of my acquaintance are now living, who were on board of her occasionally on duty ; and one of them tells me it was thought a great thing to get a sight of the Foudroyant, and he remembers the awe with which he went on her quarter-deck, and saw Captain Jervis. Another friend, Admiral Tomlinson, was on board of her in Plymouth Sound, and says that Captain Jervis was the first officer who ever set royals on all three masts. He reminded Lord St. Vincent of the circumstance

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some years since at Rochetts. This must have been a great advance on the old-fashioned manner of rigging our ships. Even in my time, I remember the flag ship sailing for India with a pole mizen topmast, and a mizen yard; flying jib-booms were never seen or thought of. The old school of officers, like the old school of ship-builders, were very bigoted to their systems. Red muzzles to the guns, white tompions, petticoat trowsers for the sailors, and long cues tied down their backs, had a formidable and warlike appearance. Yet I suspect we fought as well during the late war, without all these distinguishing marks.

Lord St. Vincent was not a vain man, and never reverted to his own actions, unless he was particularly requested to do so. In speaking to me on the one last referred to, he said, "On our way into port, the French captain showed me the copy of a letter which he had written to the Minister of the Marine, giving an account of his capture, and asking my opinion of it. I read it, and returned it to him, saying, 'I had but one objection, namely, that not one word of it was true!'"

"'Mais comment! pas vrai?' repeated the Frenchman. 'No, sir, not one word of it is true,' I repeated; 'but you can send it if you

please.' He did send it, sir ; and, when he was tried for the loss of his ship, the letter was produced : he was dismissed the service, and his sword broken over his head."

Captain Jervis, by the fame which he acquired in the capture of the *Pegase*, and the notice which was taken of him, made many enemies. It has been justly observed, that if a captain in the navy were to be roasted, another would always be found ready to turn the spit. Perhaps we deserve the censure ; but it is not confined to our profession ; lawyers, and doctors, and even tailors, and shoemakers, have the same feeling and the same principle of action—a feeling which is always the most common in proportion to a want of good sense and education.

Under a representation of the above engagement, the envious hand of a brother officer wrote, "No room to insert, eleven sail of the line looking on." This did more injury to the writer than to the object of his envy.

Captain Jervis was created a Knight Companion of the Bath, "before it was diluted by the influx of so many names and degrees of rank and character." A Companion of the Bath, until 1816, was what the Grand Crosses are now.

In 1784, Sir John Jervis was returned member to serve in parliament for Launceston, and afterwards for North Yarmouth. Before this, he had hoisted his broad pendant in the Salisbury of fifty guns, and was to have proceeded with a squadron of frigates under his orders to South America. The late Sir John Duckworth was to have gone as his captain, and my excellent and valued friend, Vice Admiral Giffard, was to have accompanied him as one of his midshipmen. But the peace put an end to all further proceedings.

Sir John Jervis was a member of the board of officers who, in 1786, were directed to inquire into the expediency of fortifying our dock yards. On this subject I believe he thought as one who relied on our naval force being able to keep off the enemy. I do not remember conversing on the subject with him; but, while I admire such sentiments as favourable to the naval power of Britain, I cannot forget that Sir Charles Hardy was outnumbered in the Channel by the combined fleet\* in 1779; and it was said to have been in deliberation whether we should not set fire to the dock yard at Plymouth, until it was suggested that the enemy could do no worse. Our naval arsenals are in fact of too much im-

\* See Beatson's Memoirs, vol. iv. p. 545.

portance to this empire to be left to the bare contingencies of wind and weather, or of ships being present to protect them ; and no expence or precaution should be spared to make them secure ; which at present they are not, and never have been. I will add that, besides being rendered invulnerable from outward attack, they should be purified from the presence of convicts. The labour done in them should be performed by honest men, at a fair and reasonable remuneration ; and so good a price should be paid as to render expulsion a severe punishment.

The plan of employing felons in our dock yards, and giving them better food and clothing than the poor but honest labourer is able to obtain, has operated as a stimulant to vice and crime, and has done infinite mischief to the morals and habits of the working classes. The miserable reason for this, which was once given to me by a gallant officer at the head of one of these establishments, was, that the men so employed did not become chargeable to the parish : forgetting how many other honest people were driven to seek parochial relief by that very system of employing convict labour. Our shameful and abandoned policy has been, first to degrade a human being to the lowest possible level, and

then to obtain his labour (as you fancy) gratuitously, in expiation of his offence. The error is great, and the plan extravagant, and may be fatal : for our dockyards are our main feature of strength and greatness.

The motto on the coat of arms of Lord St. Vincent, " Thus," was suggested, his lordship told me, by his sister, Mrs. Ricketts, who had heard the details of the above chase and the action talked over among her brother's friends so often as to become conversant in naval terms.

The expression is peculiar to ships sailing by the wind, or in chace of an enemy. When the captain or master says, in giving directions to the helmsman, " Thus," he means to keep the ship's head directed to an indicated point of the compass. The escutcheon partook of the name of both ships : an eagle grasping a thunderbolt represents the Foudroyant ; the winged horse, the Pegase.

Sir John Jervis was advanced to the rank of Rear Admiral of the Blue, on the 24th Sept., 1787 ; and in 1793 to that of Vice Admiral ; in 1795, he was made a full Admiral.

During the war, promotions were sufficiently rapid ; but, in the later years of the peace, they have not been so by any means. In 1790, after what was called the Spanish armament, two

hundred young men were promoted to the rank of lieutenants, almost every one of whom amply repaid the generous expenditure, by becoming the brightest ornaments of the profession. At that time, we had not more than one thousand two hundred lieutenants on the list, and of these there were four hundred candidates for active employment at sea. At this moment, with three thousand six hundred lieutenants on the list, there is not one to be found who will voluntarily go afloat, unless in some very particular situation, where he is morally certain of promotion. The fact is, that sufficient encouragement is not given to any class of officers, either in pay or promotion ; and no man will resign his domestic comforts, with a certainty of decreasing his income, and wearing out his constitution, without a hope of any distant or even final reward. Our young officers require the stimulant of promotion, while the old and worn out claim the national gratitude in the form of a liberal retirement. But the navy seems to have been entirely forgotten, in these days of “ economy, retrenchment, and reform.”

My warning at present will probably go for nothing ; but what will the economists and the nation say when they see the British coast insulted by a foreign fleet? and they *may* see it



ere long. In fact, Russia, France, and America, are rapidly improving their marine ; while our's, in point of officers and seamen, is going as rapidly to decay. At the same time, it must be admitted that we are improving in the art of ship-building ; but, if our sailors are not better attended to, we shall only be building fine ships for our enemies to take, thus aggravating ten-fold both our disgrace and our calamity. The injustice spoken of in the following chapter, of the appointment of children, certainly does not exist, but a neglect of the service has succeeded—a neglect the more fatal, since we scarcely know on what particular body to lay the charge. It is a general apathy and indifference to the once favoured profession, which is the sure forerunner of national decay.

## CHAPTER IV.

Sir John Jervis makes his first appearance in Parliament — Advocates the cause of Captain David Brodie — Is defeated — Remarks — Has his flag on board the Prince of 98 guns, in 1790—In 1792 makes a motion in the House of Commons in favour of disabled Seamen — Motion withdrawn in consequence of a promise for redress.

THE first time I find the name of Sir John Jervis on the records of the House of Commons, is in the minority on Mr. Fox's bill, November the 27th, 1783, for vesting the affairs of the East India Company in the hands of commissioners; but I do not find that he offered any remarks upon the occasion. The first time he spoke was on the 31st of May, 1784, when Mr. Brett, then a lord of the Admiralty, moved for twenty-six thousand seamen to be employed in the service of the current year.

On this occasion, Admiral Sir Thomas Frankland, grandfather to the present Sir Robert Frankland Russell, spoke with great energy on the decay of discipline in the navy, and the appointment of boys to the rank of lieutenants; in which complaint he was too well borne out by the facts, when it is remembered, that children

were allowed to serve their time as they lay in their nurses' laps, and to come forward almost as soon as they could "go alone," and supplant the hardy and deserving veteran. Partiality may still exist, and ever must exist as long as human nature continues what it is; but such shameful practices as these, I am happy to say, are now only mentioned as a matter of wonder, and to offer a comparison between "the good old times" and our own. Sir Robert Frankland gave instances of the appointment of boys to ships when they were so young that their captains refused to give them charge of the deck, and even offered to resign the command of their ships rather than submit to have such incompetent officers thrust upon them. A corrupt supporter of the old system attempted to turn the gallant officer into ridicule; but it did not succeed, and the truth prevailed.

On the same occasion, Sir John Jervis complained of the state of the king's ships sent to cruize after the smugglers, and said that the naval officers were perpetually at war with those of the revenue; and he recommended that the officers of his majesty's navy should be allowed a larger portion of the seizures, in order that they might have an inducement to be more alert in the performance of their duty.

I do not find that Sir John Jervis spoke on the long debates on the Duke of Richmond's plan for fortifying the dock yards in 1786, although he voted against it. On that occasion, the members being equal, the Speaker gave the casting vote on the side advocated by Sir John Jervis, and the bill was lost.

On the 22nd of March, 1786, Sir John Jervis joined with Captain M'Bride in condemning the practice of repairing old and worn-out 60 and 64 gun ships at an extravagant price; and he gave an instance of one which was repaired, contrary to the opinion of the master builder, and by order of the Navy Board, when it was found that the expense exceeded the prime cost!

It was a received opinion in those days that the copper sheathing should be taken off the ships of war when they were laid up in ordinary; as it was said that the copper corroded the iron bolts. Sir John Jervis supported the plan for taking off the copper in harbour, but it was resisted; and the substitution of copper bolts instead of iron did away with the necessity, if it had ever existed.\*

On this occasion, Mr. Brett gave a singular reason for not building our ships of war equal

\* But, besides this, the ravages of the worm called the teredo navalis, or ship-worm, which some years ago almost desolated the ports of Hol-

in size with those of the enemy, namely, that our ports had not in them a sufficient depth of water to receive vessels of that capacity. To this it was very properly replied that the largest ships we had were taken from the enemy, and had always found water enough, both in our harbours and our roadsteads.\* It is really astonishing to see at times the ignorance of public men upon subjects on which one would think a sense of duty would induce them to seek for information.

Sir John Jervis voted, in 1786, for repairing Cumberland Fort and South Sea Castle, the former commanding the entrance into Langstone Harbour, the latter that of Portsmouth. Both these were necessary and proper; but, as to the enormous expenditure on that useless lump of masonry, Monkton Fort, near Gosport, we must seek in vain for the shadow of justification for *that*. I cannot think Sir John Jervis

land, might have sunk our ships at their moorings. I have before me a piece of wood perforated by these animals, in such a manner, in holes so clean and clear, entirely through a log, that no instrument made by man could perform the work with equal certainty and neatness. The holes are of the diameter of the little finger, and so numerous and closely compacted, that in a piece not more than five inches square it is difficult to count the number. See a fine specimen of the worms in the British Museum.

• It may be remarked that the Commerce de Marseilles is the only French three-decked ship ever brought into our ports at home; and the Ville de Paris the only one which I know of ever taken in action.

had any share in it, since it is completely useless in defending the anchorage of Spithead, or the approaches to Southampton Water, or Portsmouth Harbour. How much better to have sunk piles on the Spit-sand, and at the end of Ryde Pier, to make batteries, (if they ever were or ever will be necessary for the defence of that anchorage) than to have laid out so much on that useless and unhealthy fortress !

On the 5th of March, 1787, I find Sir John Jervis advocating the cause of Captain David Brodie, and claiming for him a restoration to his rank of rear-admiral, of which he had been deprived, by being passed over in the promotion of 1778, in virtue of a then recent regulation. There was not an instance of any officer in the navy having seen so much service as Captain Brodie. His actions surpassed in number and brilliancy those of his cotemporaries, in a very extraordinary degree. He had lost an arm, and had taken the *Conquestador*, a Spanish ship of 64 guns. It is true that he enjoyed a pension for the loss of his limb ; but that surely was well earned. It was also true that he had declined to serve when his health would not permit him to perform his duty ; and although he had applied for employment in 1762, on the breaking out of the Spanish war,

it was not thought fit to give him any claim, because, in 1750, he had asked for a pension, stating his unfitness for service. Yet that pension was delayed for three years; and when he did get it, and regained his health, he was insulted by being passed over. Captain Levison Gower strongly advocated his cause. Mr. Pitt opposed it, on the grounds that it would be interfering with the royal prerogative; as if it could ever be in the royal prerogative to do an act of such scandalous injustice. George the III. was the last monarch who would have consented to hurt the feelings of any individual, however humble. His late majesty, William the IV., when he was Lord High Admiral, restored Dacres, Dobson, Peard, and Bazeley, who had all been unjustly set aside; and there was no cry of royal prerogative then. Mr. Pitt's conduct, which I have generally felt cause to admire, I cannot approve of in this instance. He was certainly wrong, upon the principle that a man who has done his utmost in the cause of his country, who has fought to desperation, lost a limb, and devoted his youth and manhood to her service, should not be treated with mockery, cruelty, and insult, in his old age, by those whose cradles and houses he defended. The motion was lost by 100 against 83, and the

gallant Brodie stands on record as a precedent against us. But Lord St. Vincent has nothing to answer for on this point, so important to naval officers. Indeed I am prepared to prove, in the instance of my own honoured parent, that his lordship ever maintained the same equitable principles. No officer, he said, should be passed over in a flag-promotion, provided he had served as long as his health would permit him, and had never disgraced himself, or given up his ship when ordered on service. My father never commanded a ship of the line, and was scarcely two years in a frigate, when his health obliged him to resign the command; but, having been employed on the regulating service from 1793 to the year 1803, Lord St. Vincent thought he was justly entitled to his flag, and in the promotion of that year he was made rear admiral of the Blue.

Our best services are in general rendered to our country in our youth and prime of manhood; and if by deeds of merit we obtain the rank of captain, and afterwards have not friends or interest to gain active employment, is that any reason why we should be neglected or degraded in old age?

It has been said, in defence of the order in council of 1827, that it was intended to prevent



an officer being employed as an admiral who had not been sufficiently long in command of ships of the line, or even frigates, to qualify him for such high responsibility. But to this I reply that the objection is futile and untenable, since it cannot be intended to interfere with the known prerogative of the Admiralty, to select such officers for command as they must or should know to be best qualified to execute their orders.

In my remarks on the appointment of Nelson and Sir Sydney Smith, which we shall presently come to, I trust that I have evinced an impartiality and candour which must place my motives beyond the suspicion of party feeling or selfish views. The truth is that the history of our navy proves our admirals to have generally been well selected ; and it is only by officers keeping a vigilant eye on what is due to themselves and their superiors, that they can ever expect to obtain and to keep their rank in the service and in society. No man ever saw this line of duty with more clearness, or pursued it with more energy, than did Sir John Jervis ; and it ultimately lifted him to the summit of his ambition.

It appears by my excellent friend Schomberg, that Sir John Jervis had his flag on board the Prince, in the Spanish armament of 1790 ; but

I do not think he could have found himself so much at his ease on board of her as he did in the *Foudroyant*; for the *Prince* was perhaps the worst sailing ship of war we ever had: we used to call her the *Haystack*. The Navy Board supposed that her bad qualities were owing to want of length, and they therefore took her into dock at Portsmouth, and cut her in two a-midships, and having drawn the parts asunder to the distance of eighteen feet, filled up the interval. But she was incurable. She went to sea with the expectation that "nothing could come near her;" but she proved, if possible, worse than ever. Yet she was almost everlasting; for while one good ship after another wore out, or got the dry rot, the *Prince* remained sound, and was only sold out of the service, I believe, last year.

When Sir John Jervis was on board the *Prince*, he cruised, during the summer, with the Channel fleet, under the command of Lord Howe; and the affair of Nootka Sound, which occasioned the armament, having been quietly terminated, the fleet was paid off.

In the whole course of his career, from his earliest day, the mind of Sir John Jervis seems to have been bent on the good of his profession, and the means of amending such abuses, or com-

pensating for such acts of negligence, as had been suffered to interfere with the real interests of seamen, of every rank and degree.

On the 17th of December, 1792, he gave notice that it was his intention to bring forward a motion for the relief of wounded and superannuated seamen. Many of these men, he observed, were in the greatest misery and want; and, notwithstanding they had, generally speaking, passed the survey which qualified them for a reception into Greenwich Hospital, still the house, not being able to receive them, they were, in a manner, abandoned by their country. He thought that all such should be entitled to an out-pension. He added that, provided a lord of the Admiralty would bring forward a motion for the relief of these neglected sufferers, he would abandon his intention. Such pledge not being given, on Thursday, the 20th of December, Sir John Jervis referred to his notice of the 7th instant, and said—

“I then declared that if the Admiralty had any measure to bring forward for the protection and preservation of these valuable men, who had spent their best days in the service of their king and country, I should not interfere; but their distressed case was so urgent and pressing, that if I did not receive satisfaction

upon the subject, I should certainly feel it my duty to agitate the question on an early day."

Three lords of the Admiralty were present, and not a word was said.

"This was the language," continued Sir John, "which I held on Monday, the 7th instant. I cannot say I am in the same disposition now, for, during the interval, the utmost industry has been used to misrepresent my motives, and describe them as a meditated attack on the Admiralty, and thereby prejudice me in the service to which I have the honour to belong. To this I reply—that my sole object is to obtain substantial relief and support for these brave men. So much for motives. I will take up the time of the house a very few minutes longer to state the grounds of the motion I hold in my hand; in doing which I shall not enter into the history of Greenwich Hospital and its resources; suffice it to say, that they failed in the year 1788, and the directors were disabled thereby from adding to the outpension list; and the principal cause of this deficiency was the profusion of expence lavished on the chapel, that monstrous jumble of the arts, which is a disgrace to the country. I do not include, in this description, the fine painting of the altar, which, with many other great works of the President of the

Royal Academy, will immortalize his fame. Nor is this the only grievance the seamen suffer from the failure of the funds. I appeal to the right honourable gentleman opposite [Mr. Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, and at that time treasurer of the navy] whether many of them are not kept out of their prize-money by frivolous delays and arts, to defeat their claims, and whether the salutary laws and regulations the right honourable gentleman has introduced for their protection, by which he has proved himself their best friend, or even the vigilance and activity of Mr. Beddingfield, can reach the evil; though, by the firmness and perseverance of that gentleman, some of those vile caitiffs, the low agents and forgers of seamen's wills, have been brought to justice, and the rest so disheartened that their wicked practices are nearly subdued. No part of this censure is applicable to another description of agents, for whom I entertain a high respect, and without whose assistance, on fair and liberal terms, half the officers now called upon could not make their equipments. I understand the right honourable gentleman intends to bring in a bill to wrest the prize-money out of the hands it is in. I am happy to perceive by his nod that I am not misinformed, and he shall have my hearty support.

**I will not trouble the House longer than to declare that my ill state of health prevented my bringing the matter forward in the last session."**

He then, after a few words more, deprecating any wish to impugn the motives or views of the Admiralty, concluded by moving an address to his majesty, to the effect referred to in his speech. Mr. Hussey supported the motion.

A conversation then took place, in which it was understood that the case of the seamen should be seriously attended to at the Admiralty, Mr. Secretary Dundas declaring that the earliest and most particular attention should be given to the subject.

Sir John Jervis subsequently agreed to withdraw his motion ; and I find no more mention of his name in the House of Commons. Having been shortly after called into active service, he did not again appear in parliament until his splendid actions had elevated him to the peerage.

This motion of Sir John Jervis, relative to destitute seamen, was but a forerunner of those great measures which he ever had in view—the reform of those abuses which, even in that early day, he saw were sapping the foundation of the empire. His naval inquiry in 1802 was nothing more than the entire development of his vast plans. There was not a word uttered by the

gallant admiral on that occasion which was, or could be, contradicted by any member of the House of Commons. It was admitted tacitly by the ministers that abuses did exist; that the sailors who had fought and bled in their country's cause were debarred from the enjoyment of their right; and relief and redress were promised at least, if not substantially granted. Certain it is that the seamen in Greenwich Hospital began to receive more attention about that time. I have heard my father say—and the fact was well attested—that in those “good old times” noblemen and gentlemen obtained admission for their coachmen and worn-out butlers and footmen, into that noble asylum, intended exclusively for our gallant sailors and marines! With respect to the ornamenting of the chapel out of the funds intended for the support of the institution, and the payment of the outpension, it was a shameful abuse; something like repairing the parish workhouse with the poor's rates, while the paupers were starving in the streets. This abuse Sir John Jervis had the honour of dragging before the public, and exposing it to just execration; thus, in his earliest political career, proving himself the unbought and incorruptible friend of the friendless.

## CHAPTER V.

**Expedition to attack the French Carribee Islands — Sir John Jervis and Sir Charles Grey appointed to the command of the land and sea forces — Names of ships, regiments, and principal officers — Arrival of the forces at Barbadoes — Departure for Martinique — Landing and success exactly similar to that of 1808 — Attack on Fort Bourbon and Fort Republican — The affair of Captain Brown in the Asia — Faulkner and the quartermaster — Surrender of the island — The forces proceed to St. Lucia, which also surrenders — The Admiral and the General then prepare to attack Guadaloupe — Particulars of the events on that island — Storming of Fleur d'Epée — Dreadful carnage — Final surrender — Too many troops of the enemy left on the island — Prince Edward, father of our present most gracious Queen, present on the occasion, and returns to North America — The naval and military forces return to Guadaloupe — Sad reverses — Ravages of the yellow fever — Barbarous conduct of Victor Hugues — Death of General Dundas and Captain Robertson — Narrow escape of Captain Burnett — Horrible cruelty practised on the French Royalists — Murder of the sick in the streets and hospitals — Arrival of Vice-Admiral Caldwell and General Vaughan with reinforcements — Departure of Sir John Jervis and Sir Charles Grey for England — They arrive at Spithead — Final surrender of the Guadaloupe to the French — Ravages of the yellow fever — Observations on the persecution raised against the Commander-in-chief at home for their alleged peculation in the islands — The charges disproved in Parliament — Violent memorandum of Lieutenant General Prescott — Destruction of the Boyne by fire at Spithead.**

**In 1794 the commands on the different stations were thus disposed of. Lord Howe had the Channel fleet, with generally from twenty-five to thirty sail of the line under his orders ; Ad-**



miral Duncan had the North Seas ; Sir Peter Parker was port-admiral at Portsmouth ; Admiral Peyton in the Downs ; Sir Richard King at Plymouth ; Lord Hood in the Mediterranean ; Admiral Rainier in the East Indies ; Admiral Murray in North America ; Commodore Ford at Jamaica ; Rear Admiral Allan Gardner at Barbadoes ; and in November of this year, after the unsuccessful attack on Martinique, Sir John Jervis was appointed to the chief command on the Leeward Island station. The object for sending him out, and the forces which accompanied him, will be seen in the following statement, for the chief portion of which I am indebted to the Rev. Cooper Willyams, who went out as chaplain of the *Boyne* on that occasion. The same writer was afterwards chaplain of the *Swiftsure*, in the memorable battle of the Nile, of which, and the events in the Mediterranean, he has also published a very elaborate account.

The expedition to attack the French Carribee Islands was decided on late in 1793 ; and Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Grey, and Vice-Admiral Sir John Jervis, were nominated respectively to command the land and sea forces to be employed on the occasion. The fleet sailed from St. Helens on the 26th November.

On the 16th of December, after encountering

much bad weather, they passed Porto Santo ; stopped at Funchal (but without anchoring) to take in wine and fruit, for which that lovely island has been so long celebrated ; and on Monday the 6th of January, 1794, the Boyne and her convoy anchored in Carlisle bay, Barbadoes ; and the two chiefs immediately set about the work of war. Gun-boats were built and prepared, and every preparation made to attack Martinique.

The following is a list of the ships of war, and their commanders, which were under the orders of Sir John Jervis :—

GUNS.		
Boyne . . . . .	98 . . . .	{ George Grey, son of the General commanding-in-chief.
Vengeance . . . . .	74 . . . .	Commodore Thompson.
		Capt. (afterwards Lord Henry) Paulet.
Veteran . . . . .	64 . . . .	Charles Edmund Nugent.
Asia . . . . .	64 . . . .	John Brown.
Experiment . . . .	44, <i>flute</i> . .	Simon Miller.
Woolwich . . . . .	44 do. . . .	John Parker.
Dromedary . . . . .	44 do. . . .	Sandford Tatham.
Assistance . . . . .	44 . . . .	Velters Cornwall Berkeley.
Roebuck . . . . .	44, Hospital	Andrew Christie.
Beaulieu . . . . .	40 . . . .	John Salisbury.
Santa Margareta . .	32 . . . .	Eliab Harvey.
Ceres . . . . .	32 . . . .	Richard Incedon.
Winchelsea . . . . .	32 . . . .	Lord Viscount Garlies.
Blanche . . . . .	32 . . . .	Christopher Parker.
Terpsichore . . . .	32 . . . .	William Hancock Kelly.
Quebec . . . . .	32 . . . .	Josias Rogers.
Rose . . . . .	28 . . . .	Edward Rion.
Vesuvius . . . . .	Bomb . . . .	Charles Sawyer.

## GUNS.

Nautilus . . . . .	18	. .	Charles Carpenter.
Rattlesnake . . . . .	18	. .	Matthew Henry Scott.
Seaflower . . . . .	16	. .	William Pierrepont.
Zebra . . . . .	16	. .	Robert Faulkner.

The land forces employed were as follows: a detachment of white, and a ditto of black dragoons; three battalions of grenadiers; three ditto of light infantry; 6th, 9th, 15th, 43rd, 56th, 58th, 64th, 65th, and 70th regiments, with detachments from the 2d, 21st, and 60th regiments.

The troops were divided into three brigades; the 1st commanded by Lieutenant-General Prescott; the second by Major-General Thomas Dundas; the 3d by His Royal Highness Prince Edward, the late Duke of Kent, until whose arrival from Canada, the division was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Charles Gordon. The total force embarked for the attack of the island of Martinique, was 6,085, 224 being sick, and 970 being left sick at Barbadoes.

On the 3rd of February the expedition sailed from Carlisle bay, and on Wednesday the 5th, the Boyne and the whole fleet came to an anchor not far from Pointe la Borgneuse. The troops were instantly put into the flat boats, and were preparing to land, when the battery

opened a heavy fire on them, which the ships returned in gallant style, while the boats pushed in, and the soldiers jumped on shore, covered by the fire of the gun-boats. The fire from the Boyne and the Veteran so alarmed the enemy that they fled in disorder, leaving their fort, which our troops instantly entered, and hoisted the British flag. The ships, on seeing this, saluted the well known symbol with three hearty cheers. A trench was found cut in the battery, in which a train was laid communicating with the magazine, and a firebrand placed across it; but, happily, the cowardly plot was discovered in time to prevent mischief. A two-gun battery at St. Luce was silenced by the Veteran, and the enemy fled, having, however, first set fire to their sugar-canes.

On the 6th of February, our troops landed at Trois Rivières, about 2,400 strong, under the command of Lieutenant-General Prescott. Sir Charles Grey, the commander-in-chief, now landed from the Boyne, in which himself and staff had come out from England.

On the 7th of February, Lieutenant Miln was sent with a flag of truce, accompanied by Lieutenant James Watt of the 50th regiment, with a letter to the mayor or head of the municipality of Maran. The enemy, however, would

not respect the flag of truce, but opened a fire on it, in consequence of which the Lieutenant retreated, and left his letter in charge of a wounded enemy, whom he found lying on the beach, with his leg broken.

The French subsequently stated that they did not mean to fire on a flag of truce, but only on the *white* flag, which was that of the Bourbon. In consequence of this it was agreed between the belligerents that, in future, flags of truce should have the enemy's flag in the bow, or forward, and their own national colours in the stern.

Nothing could be more harmonious than the feeling of the army and navy while acting together on this occasion; and it was observed that the jealousies and bickerings so fatal in the expedition of Vernon and Wentworth were unknown at Martinique.

Mount Maturin was taken as in 1808, and a battery on its summit compelled the surrender of Pigeon Island, which lies at the foot of it, distant about 400 yards. Two soldiers having been guilty of plundering an inhabitant of this island, contrary to the orders of the British general, were tried, condemned, and executed, in view of the whole army, on the 8th of February.

As soon as Pigeon Island (*Isle aux Ramiers*) had surrendered, the admiral came round in the *Boyne*, with the fleet from Ance D'Arlet, and anchored in Fort Royal bay; and very shortly after, the enemy having abandoned the out-ports, the forts of Bourbon on the hill, and of Fort Louis, or Republican, at the water side, were completely invested and blockaded by land and sea.

While the army was vigorously pursuing the enemy in every direction, the admiral sent a squadron round to attack St. Pierre, the second place in the island in point of importance, but by far the most beautiful town. The squadron was under the command of Captain, now Sir Charles Edmund Nugent, the present admiral of the fleet.

The place was soon in possession of the English, and perfect order was established. A poor drummer in the British army having been detected in the act of plundering, was, by order of the provost-marshal, instantly hung up at the door of the Jesuits' college.

The operations of the subsequent siege and capture of Fort Bourbon are so exactly similar in every particular to those which occurred in 1808, and which I have already related in the Naval History, that I shall spare my readers

the trouble of reading them in this work. Fort Louis (afterwards named, by the French, Fort Republican, and by the English, after its surrender, Fort Edward), was severely bombarded by the Vesuvius bomb, under the direction of Captain Suckling of the Royal Artillery.

The attack on the enemy's works now commenced in good earnest, and with great spirit. It was here that the gallant and unfortunate young Faulkner killed the British sailor on the battery, in the heat of passion. I have spoken of this melancholy affair elsewhere. The excuse offered for him by Cooper Willyams does more honour to the head than to the heart of the reverend author. Let me hope it will be a warning to our youth in future, and let them remember that the most important command any man can hold in this world, and that which is most likely to entail benefits and blessings, is the command of ourselves.

It was here, also, that the lamented Bowen, who was afterwards killed at Teneriffe, distinguished himself so much in boarding a frigate in the carrénage in the open day, and bringing away her captain, officers, and crew.

The history of the conduct of Captain Browne, of the Asia, I shall now give in Cooper Willyams's own words.

“ On the 19th, a well directed and heavy fire was kept up on Fort Louis and Fort Bourbon. In the morning, about ten o'clock, the Asia of 64 guns, Captain Browne, and the Zebra of 16 guns, Captain Faulkner, got under way. The Zebra led in toward the mouth of the harbour, receiving the enemy's fire of grape and round without returning a shot. The Asia had got within range of grape shot, when, to the surprise of every body, she wore, and came out from the fort. The admiral, Sir John Jervis, had previously made the signal for the rest of the fleet to be ready to second the attempts of the two ships, by loosing the topsails of the Boyne, and lying at single anchor, ready to slip and run in. On perceiving the Asia was foiled in her attempt, and supposing, as she was under a heavy fire from the fort, that either Captain Browne was killed, or that some other desperate accident had happened, the commander-in-chief instantly despatched Captain George Grey of the Boyne to take the command of the Asia, and, if he could not get in, to run her aground under the walls of the fort. Captain Grey soon returned, and brought the pleasing intelligence that not a man was hurt on board the Asia. She then stood in again, and again put about when near the harbour, and sailed out from it.”



Such is the account of this transaction given by an eye-witness, a man of character and veracity.

It was when speaking on this subject one day at the dinner table at Rochetts, that Lady Northesk said to Earl St. Vincent, " Pray, my lord, why did you not bring Captain Browne to a court-martial ? "

His lordship replied, " Madam, I thought it best to let him go home quietly ; " but he should have been tried, and the question settled on the spot.

The ultimate surrender of the Island, and the terms of the capitulation, are well known. The colours and paraphernalia usually taken on such occasions, were brought to England by Major Grey, the second son of his excellency the commander-in-chief, and presented by him to his Majesty.

Martinique having thus fallen, the two commanders-in-chief, with the land and sea forces, proceeded to the neighbouring island of St. Lucia, about six leagues south of Martinique, and twenty-one north-west from Barbadoes. This island was also taken in the same gallant style ; and, unlike Martinique, it still remains in our possession. The name of Morne Fortunée, the fort on the hill commanding the carrénage,

or anchorage, was changed, by His Royal Highness Prince Edward, to that of Fort Charlotte, in honour of his royal parent.

As soon as the necessary arrangements were completed for securing this conquest, the admiral and general again returned in the Boyne to Martinique, where they laid their plans for proceeding down to the attack of Guadaloupe, for which island they sailed with the squadron on Tuesday the 8th of April.

In the mean time, Captain Josias Rogers in the Quebec, Richard Incledon in the Ceres, Matthew Henry Scott in the Rose, and Faulkner in the Blanche, were detached to take the Saintes, a cluster of small islands, lying between Dominica and Guadaloupe. They soon possessed themselves of these; and on the 1st of April the Boyne and Veteran came down and anchored in the bay of Point à Pitre, Guadaloupe, off the village of Gozier, preparatory to a combined attack on this, the largest and most beautiful of the French Carribee Islands, in which the enemy seems to have concentrated all his remaining resources.

Considering the heat of the climate, and the natural abatement of that elasticity of body and mind with which the natives of our islands are so peculiarly gifted, it was surprising with what

energy the commander-in-chief followed up the blows struck on Martinique and St. Lucia. No sooner had they reached the anchorage at Point à Pitre, than, without waiting for the assemblage of the whole of their force, (which, owing to adverse winds and currents, did not arrive till the following day) they landed with the force they could collect. Sir Charles Grey, with the 1st and 2nd battalion, one company of the 43rd regiment of Infantry, together with 50 marines and 400 seamen of the *Boyne*, under the command of Captain Grey, the son of the general, made good their landing by one o'clock in the morning of the 11th of April, under a severe fire from fort Fleur d'Epée, and a three-gun battery at Gozier. This impeded their operations, until Lord Garlies, in the *Winchelsea*, laid his frigate as close to the shore as the depth of water would admit (within about half musket-shot), and drove the enemy from their works, when the debarkation was completed without any loss. Preparations were next made for storming the strong post of Fort Fleur d'Epée. The assailants were placed under the orders of Major-general Dundas. The soldiers were particularly directed not to fire, but to trust entirely to the bayonet; and the seamen, who were under the command of Captain, now

Admiral, Sir Edmund Charles Nugent, and Captain Faulkner, were desired to use their pikes and swords. These orders were all punctually obeyed ; and it would be difficult, without an exact knowledge of the nature of the place, to convey to the reader a correct idea of the scene which ensued. The troops intended for the assault all marched to their respective posts, and the signal for the attack was to be the firing of the morning gun from the Boyne, as she lay in the bay. The fatal gun was fired as the ship's bell sounded for five o'clock. The troops dashed forward with British ardour. The alarm was given to the enemy, who were constantly on the alert ; but their outposts were driven in, the piquet-guard bayoneted, and in an instant the sides of the hill on which the fort is situated were covered with our people, scrambling up to the top, under a tremendous discharge of grape and musquetry, with a determination to enter the enemy's embrasures, into which some of our sailors jumped. The soldiers were not long behind them ; but they, with more of the method of the art of war, had reached the gates, which, after some difficulty, they forced open, and a scene of horrible conflict took place. The brave and resolute Frenchmen fought till overpowered by the physical force of our gallant

countrymen, when they fled in disorder. Thus Fleur d'Epée was taken, and with it fell Hog Island and Fort Louis, which commands the entrance into the harbour of Point à Pitre, the town of that name being at the same time taken possession of by Sir Charles Grey.

Our loss was only 54 killed and wounded; that of the enemy, 250, or nearly five to one. Fort Fleur d'Epée is strongly situated on the summit of a hill, but is commanded by Morne Mascott.

On this occasion, Faulkner was engaged hand to hand with a French officer; and, having missed his blow, the more powerful Frenchman closed with his adversary, disarmed him, and was on the point of plunging his sword into his body, when a British sailor sprang forward, and with his pike pinned the gallant foe to the earth, and saved his captain.

“Being the only chaplain there present,” says Mr. Willyams, “I went up early in the evening, as soon as the action was over, to bury the dead. At the foot of the hill lay several of our seamen, badly wounded. A little farther on, under some tall trees, were several naval officers, reposing after the fatigues of the morning; their men not far from them; farther on a party of wounded prisoners were brought in by

our people; and at the gates of the fort lay a heap of slain, who had died by the sword or the bayonet. Within the fort lay a multitude of miserable wretches, expiring of their wounds, and many of our own people in the same situation. In the midst of this, his excellency was writing his despatches, on a table on which lay an artilleryman sleeping, being overcome with fatigue, and the general would not allow him to be disturbed." In the midst of these sufferings, it is pleasant to record traits of this kind, of heroes who, when the fury of battle has subsided, have human feelings and sympathies.

His Royal Highness Prince Edward, afterwards Duke of Kent, and father of our most gracious Queen, was present at this action, as were also Colonels Symes and Cradock. By the capture of Fleur d'Epée and its dependences, Grandterre, or the larger part of the island of Guadaloupe, was wrested from the enemy. Basseterre, from which it is divided by the little river Sallee, or a narrow arm of the sea, was next to be attacked.

Garrisons having been left in the captured forts, the general, with the remainder of the army, embarked on board the respective ships; and the Staffower brig, commanded by Captain W. Pierrepont, was sent home with despatches.

Prince Edward accompanying the commander-in-chief, they landed with the troops at Petite Bourg, and the enemy immediately retreated to the strong post of Palmiste. The *Boyne*, with the admiral's flag, anchored, in the mean time, in Ance de Bailiff. On the night of the 17th, the enemy set fire to the beautiful town of Basseterre, and consumed the whole of the west end of it. At one o'clock on the morning of the 20th, the commander-in-chief advanced with all his forces to attack the heights of Palmiste, consisting of a chain of batteries. At dawn of day, the light infantry, commanded by Colonel Coote, and the grenadiers, by Prince Edward, attacked the uppermost fort and carried it, putting 30 of the enemy to death. This post commanding all the other three, our guns were turned upon them, and they surrendered without much farther opposition; in consequence of these losses, the governor of the island, M. Callet, sent out a flag of truce, with proposals to deliver up the island to the British forces. Guadalupe was ultimately given up to us on the same terms which had been granted to Martinique and St. Lucia.

As soon as the conquest of these islands was completed, Prince Edward returned in a frigate to North America.

An error was committed here, but perhaps it was unavoidable: we left too many French troops on the island. A body of 1500 men from France landed shortly after, during the absence of our ships; and the island was retaken by the French, when scenes of the utmost barbarity ensued.

I have related how that event was brought about, as well as the more serious misfortunes which befel the other conquests in the Carribee Islands, owing to the neglect and misconduct of one or two of our naval officers on that station.—(See Naval History, 1st and 2d editions.)\* It is painful to recur to these subjects, but justice demands that we state nothing which is false, and conceal nothing which is true.

Victor Hugues having regained possession of Guadaloupe, was enabled from thence, with the aid of the forces which were subsequently allowed to enter his ports unmolested, to spread desolation round those unfortunate settlements.

The exertions of Sir John Jervis and Sir Charles Grey to regain possession of Guadeloupe, were infinitely more arduous than the

\* This refers to the rencontre between the two British ships, *Bellona* and *Alarm*, and the French squadron and convoy to windward of *Desada*, after Sir John Jervis had quitted the West Indies.



labour of its first conquest; but the rainy season and the yellow fever, together with the approach of the hurricane months, sadly retarded, and finally frustrated, all their efforts. Many good and gallant officers were lost, and among others Captain Robertson, of the Veteran, who had succeeded to the command of that ship when Captain Nugent was sent home with despatches.

Captain Burnet, of the 43d regiment, was blown up at the same time, and so disfigured by the powder, that his own grenadiers took him for a French black, and, (not very humanely) seeing he was wounded, inflicted on him three stabs with their bayonets, before he could make known to them who he was, and that his arm was already broken by a musket-ball. Captain Burnet ultimately recovered from his wounds.

By the 1st of July the whole scene was drawing to a sad conclusion: the death of the gallant Robertson was almost the concluding event. If valour, conduct, and perseverance, could have saved the island, it would have been saved; but our brave fellows, in a night attack on *Morne Gouvernement*, were mown down with volleys of grape and musquetry; and when General Fisher sounded a retreat, and the remains of the unfortunate detachment got back to Fort Mascot,

General Grey found that any farther attempt would have been worse than useless. He therefore strengthened the posts on Basseterre, which he supposed he could have made tenable during the hurricane months, at the expiration of which farther reinforcements might be expected. But in this hope he was fatally deceived ; and the drain of British soldiers, occasioned by the improvident and ill-advised measure of retaining the island of St. Domingo, might be said to have so scattered and divided our forces, that, while every thing was attempted in that pestilential climate, nothing was effected. Thus the error committed off Deseada, the yellow fever, the dispersion of Admiral Christian's fleet, and the determination to defend St. Domingo, all combined to ruin our cause in the West Indies, and had nearly ended in the loss of all our islands. The chiefs were, however, not to be blamed for that result. After they had done all that human wisdom and fortitude could achieve, they embarked in the Boyne, and retired to Fort Royal Bay, Martinique. Sir Charles Grey established his head-quarters at St. Pierre, in that island, and the Boyne was laid up for the hurricane months in the harbour of Trois Islets.

That Sir John Jervis never lost an opportunity of serving an officer or his family, if he

considered they had any claim on the service, I have often said, and the following letter will tend to confirm the truth of my assertion. When writing to the Admiralty an account of the unfortunate affairs at Guadaloupe in July, 1794, he says, "The fate of Captain Lewis Robertson, who had distinguished himself, fills my mind with the deepest regret. He had been a child of misfortune, although he possessed talents to merit every success and prosperity, and, as I am informed, he has left a widow and infant family unprovided for. I beg leave to recommend them to the protection and good offices of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, to obtain a suitable provision, which will be an encouragement to officers in similar circumstances to emulate so great an example."

The successes of the enemy at Guadaloupe, and the ravages of the yellow fever, had reduced our troops to a mere handful. The sick were barbarously murdered by the French and the blacks, while in the hospitals, or as they crawled down to the water-side, in hopes of being taken on board by their indefatigable countrymen. "From the hospitals to the wharf," says Cooper Willyams, "was a continued scene of misery and horror, the roads being strewn with dead

or the sick, who were put to death as they crawled along."

An account of the state of affairs in Guadeloupe reached Sir John Jervis, on board the *Boyne*, in Trois Islets Bay, about the latter end of September; and, although the hurricane months were not yet gone by, the admiral prepared his ship for sea, and on Tuesday, the 30th of September, sailed with Sir Charles Grey, and arrived in Gozier Bay, in Guadeloupe, immediately after. Two batteries, firing red hot shot, opened on the *Boyne* and the squadron, but without effect. The British troops held the fort and camp at Berville, which was so closely surrounded and blockaded by the enemy, that Sir John Jervis endeavoured in vain to gain or establish any sort of communication with it.

General Graham, who commanded there, performed prodigies of valour, destroying the assailants by hundreds as they approached to attack him. Cooper Willyams says they lost 2,000 French and blacks in their various attacks; but the general being wounded, and many of his leading officers killed, a surrender by capitulation became imperative. Every endeavour was resorted to, to have the French royalists included in the capitulation; but in

vain. Twenty-five only of the officers were allowed to go off in a covered boat, and reached the British ships in safety. Two others ran down to the beach in the hope of getting into the same boat, but, finding they were too late, shot themselves on the spot. The infamous Victor Hugues, second in atrocity to none of his countrymen, even in those days of terror, erected a guillotine, and struck off the heads of about fifty of these brave but unfortunate men. The others were tied hand to hand, and, being drawn up on the sides of those trenches which their valour had so well defended, were fired at by recruits; and the living, the dead, and the wounded, all falling together, were instantly buried in one common grave.

Berville having been thus given up to the enemy, Sir John Jervis, who, from the Boyne, had witnessed the conflict without being able to afford any assistance, now made sail for Basseterre, in order to assist General Prescott in the defence of Fort Matilda; and to do so effectively he anchored his noble ship within one hundred yards of the town. Every service was rendered which could be afforded by the navy, and was gratefully acknowledged by the general and the army. At length the Boyne was compelled to put to sea, the enemy having raised

batteries at Basseterre which annoyed her, and prevented her longer occupying that anchorage. It is well known that guns mounted on rocky eminences are very awkward things for ships to engage with. On this occasion, the *Boyne* stood much and severe firing for some hours, and caused no injury to the enemy, whose guns were quite above her power of elevation.

Fort Matilda, now so gallantly defended by General Prescott, and so hardly pressed by the enemy (who commanded the heights above it, and could look down upon it, and see every man that moved); was all that remained to us in the islands. All the buildings in this fort were destroyed, and our brave countrymen were driven into the bomb-proofs, for shelter from the shot, shells, and musquetry of the enemy.

On the 6th of November, Victor Hugues sent in an insolent summons to General Prescott, to which the general replied that he would defend his post as long as he could. The enemy then opened a furious fire on the fort, to which the British general made no return throughout the day.

On the 14th of November, 1794, the *Majestic*, 74, Captain Wescott, having the flag of Vice-Admiral Caldwell; the *Theseus*, 74, Captain Calder; and the *Bellona*, 74, Captain Wilson,

arrived from England. They gave information that Admiral Caldwell had come to relieve Sir John Jervis, and that General Vaughan had arrived at St. Pierre, Martinique, for the purpose of relieving Sir Charles Grey.

Worn down by the most incessant fatigues and anxieties, harassed alike in body and in mind, Sir John Jervis reluctantly withdrew with his colleagues from the scene of hopeless contention. He recalled his seamen from Fort Matilda, where they had been assisting, under the command of Lieutenant James, in the defence of the place, and sailed for St. Pierre, Martinique, taking along with him Sir Charles Grey and his suite; and on the 27th of November the admiral sailed for England. He had a very stormy and tedious passage of nearly two months; but on the 21st January, 1795, he anchored at Spithead, when Sir Charles Grey and himself set off for London.

It would be ungenerous to the memory of the gallant General Prescott, and his distinguished aide-du-camp, Captain Thomas, not to give the result of the siege of Fort Matilda, or Fort St. Charles, as it was called when we first took it. The fort had been so continually and effectually battered from the commanding heights of Mascot, that the bastions were in ruins,

and falling into the ditches; and not a man could appear on the walls for their defence, so completely were they commanded by the covered musquetry of the enemy.

On the 29th of November, General Vaughan sent Captain Cockburne to Fort Matilda, to acquaint General Prescott that no more men could be spared to him. Under these circumstances, General Prescott thought only of saving the lives of his brave associates. Of the officers few remained, and none of intermediate rank between himself and his gallant aide-du-camp, Captain Thomas; for the yellow fever had done as much as the enemy, in thinning his ranks. He therefore very soon settled a place of embarkation with Rear Admiral Thompson, whose flag was in the *Vengeance*, of 74 guns; and on the 10th of December, at 9 p. m., the evacuation was commenced, and conducted with so much skill and secresy, that not a man was lost. Bowen, of the *Terpsichore*, the invaluable Bowen, who fell at Teneriffe, was the only man wounded in this affair; he received a chance musket-shot in his cheek. The enemy, unconscious that the fort was evacuated, continued their fire upon it until 2 o'clock the next morning, just three hours after the evacuation had been completed! The whole force which marched



out of Fort Matilda was between four and five hundred men, after a siege of 58 days, during which the heroic General had stood a constant bombardment, and had 17 of his men killed, and 59 wounded. He returned with his little band to St. Pierre, Martinique.

In the course of the West India campaign of 1794, 170 officers in the army died of yellow fever, and other disorders incidental to the climate, and 27 were killed, or died of their wounds. Of the officers of the navy and the seamen who fell, I can give no exact account; but it was stated by Captain Schank, the agent for transports in the expedition, that 46 masters of transports, and 1100 of their men, had died of yellow fever. On board the Broderic transport, the mate being the only survivor, was compelled to scul himself on shore to fetch off negroes to throw the dead overboard; and he died himself soon after!

The part of Sir John Jervis's naval career which was most painful to him, was the consequences of his glorious West-India campaign. At this distance of time, it would not become me to exonerate my illustrious friend at the expense of others; I cannot therefore enter deeply into the merits of the case, but I will give the facts, and leave the reader to draw his own conclusions.

In 1795, a motion of censure on the naval and military commanders-in-chief was proposed in the House of Commons by Mr. Barham. It appears that on the capture of Martinique by the British forces, in 1794, a proclamation was issued by the joint orders of Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis, the purport of which was to levy a contribution generally on the proprietors of estates in the island, or, as Mr. Giffard says, in his life of Mr. Pitt, "to use the unprecedented expression of one of these proclamations, *to raise a sum of money adequate to the value of the conquest*;"\* and, as the means of effecting this end, to obtain a specification of all the property in the island. And unless this mandate was complied with, the commanders declared it to be their firm resolution to avail themselves of the power with which they were invested, to order and enforce a general confiscation. "This proclamation," says Mr. Giffard, from whom I still quote, "was condemned on two grounds; first, as being contrary to the general usages of war, and, secondly, as being a breach of that promise of security to persons and property which was publicly held forth by the British commanders, previous to the reduction of the island." This, I think, is

\* Woodfall's Reports, June 2, 1795, pp. 412, 413.

not a fair and candid statement of the facts. When the island was originally summoned, such, no doubt, were the terms held out, on condition of a surrender without resistance. But these conditions were entirely abrogated by a rejection of the proposals, and by the subsequent capture of the forts of the island by storm. Such were the terms held out at Copenhagen by Admiral Gambier and Lord Cathcart, in 1807; and, on their rejection, the city was bombarded and taken, and the fleet brought away. At Martinique there did not happen to be any moveable property; and, as the island had been taken by force of arms, the chiefs had, according to the usages of war in the like cases, an undoubted right to levy a contribution by way of indemnification to the captors.

The motion of Mr. Barham was very weakly seconded by Mr. Manning, who read to the House passages from various letters which he had received from the West Indies, and which, if the House had known as much of the manners and customs of a set of banditti who once infested and disgraced those beautiful colonies as I happened to know of them, they would not have listened to for one moment.\*

\* It is notorious that in these colonies there were renegadoes who covered and concealed enemy's property for a certain premium. Thus

Mr. Grey, afterwards Lord Howick, and eldest son of Sir Charles Grey, defended the conduct of his father and the gallant admiral. He very properly insisted on the right of confiscation, as perfectly consonant with the law of nations. It appeared from his statement, however, that the proclamation had been disavowed by the Colonial Secretary of State, and that the moment the Commander-in-chief found it was considered oppressive, it had been annulled. Mr. Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, defended the chiefs, on the same ground which I have myself adopted; and he added, that the two proclamations of the 10th May, 1794, never having been acted upon, could not come before the House for its decision. Finally, he concluded by moving two resolutions: the first was, that the inhabitants of Martinique had not availed themselves of the terms held out to them in the proclamation of the 1st January, 1794; and there was no general rule founded on the law of nations, respecting pri-

the estates of a French island were nominally sold to an inhabitant of Barbadoes or St. Lucia, perhaps of Antigua or Grenada. I detected an Englishman, in 1808, when we held Martinique in rigid blockade, carrying supplies into the island. I took his vessel, and put him in irons, and handed him over to the Admiral, while I sent my prize into port, where she was condemned, hull and cargo. The man was very insolent, and muttered something about the rights of Englishmen; but I told him he was a rebel and no Englishman, and I never heard any more of him.

vate property, which entitled them to the advantages therein offered, after the resistance they had shown to His Majesty's forces; and, secondly, that this House does most cordially agree in again expressing their thanks to Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis, in the same manner as they had been voted on the 10th of May in the preceding year. This resolution was carried by a very considerable majority.

Mr. Giffard, in his life of Mr. Pitt, vol. iv. p. 339, concurs with Mr. Grey; but contends that both Mr. Dundas and the House went too far, inasmuch as the first resolution went to justify the proclamation which both the Ministers and the Commander-in-chief had condemned, and the latter had withdrawn; and he also contended that there was no precedent for *repeating* the vote of thanks. Thus the affair ended, to the entire acquittal and satisfaction of the accused parties. There seems to have been an observation omitted, and which, I think, would have come with high authority from a British senate,—namely, that our enemies should be taught to know the difference between capture and capitulation; the first being usually the effect of overwhelming power and valour, with danger to the invaders; the second, a friendly compromise, on conditions of advantage held

out to the defensive party before a sword is drawn.

A very considerable body of seamen and marines having been landed from the ships of the squadron, Sir John Jervis took upon him to issue such orders for their guidance as he thought expedient. This seems to have given offence to Lieutenant-General Prescott, the Commander-in-chief at Guadaloupe, who, in consequence, issued the following extraordinary memorandum, which was copied from the General's order-book by a naval officer of rank then on the station:

Whereas Vice-Admiral Sir John Jervis has given orders frequently here on shore, and particularly in a note, dated 'Boyne, off Point à Pitre, June 11,' which must have arisen either from great ignorance or great presumption and arrogance; if from ignorance, poor man, he is to be pitied; but if from great presumption and arrogance, to be checked: it is therefore Lieutenant-General Prescott's orders, that, in future, no attention is to be given to such notes or orders, and his signature to be as little regarded as those of John O'Nokes and Peter Stiles. (Dated June, 1794.)

Without entering into the merits of the question, one way or the other, whether Sir John

Jervis did give such orders without authority or not, it must be clear to every military man, and to every man of common sense, that the above was not the proper way to bring the question to issue. On the contrary, it was taking the law into his own hands, and holding up the naval Commander-in-chief to ridicule and contempt. It was sowing dissensions between the two services, and endangering the united forces employed in the expedition ; but I never heard that it produced any results, or led to any inquiry. Perhaps it was hushed up.

In May, 1795, Sir John Jervis's noble flag-ship, the Boyne of 98 guns, and 750 men, was set fire to at Spithead by accident, burnt to the water's edge, and blew up. To this awful and melancholy scene, I was myself an eye-witness, being at that time a midshipman of the Queen Charlotte, and at the bursting out of the conflagration was on board the Glory of 98 guns in Portsmouth harbour, attending the trial of Captain Molloy. Admiral Peyton was the president of the court, and on the alarm being given that the Boyne was on fire, he observed that he hoped he should not be twice burnt out of a 98-gun ship. His flag was then flying on board the Boyne ; and he had been captain of the Prince George when that ship was burnt in the Bay of Biscay in the

year 1759. He was on that occasion saved by floating on a hencoop. I have described this fatal event in another work ; I shall, therefore, say little more on the subject, than that I returned to my own ship as fast as I could. She was getting under weigh, as was every ship at Spithead, including the Royal William. When I got on board I found that the Boyne's guns, having been shotted, had discharged themselves into the Queen Charlotte, and killed two of our men, whom I saw lying on the main deck.

Sir John Jervis lost very considerable property on board of her, and, I have heard, some valuable papers ; but I do not remember his ever adverting much to the painful subject. His friend the late Sir George Grey was the captain ; but he was either on leave of absence or on shore at the time. No blame could be imputed to him ; but the accident was one which should have been more generally guarded against in the navy. I have more than two or three times seen the ward-room funnels heated red hot, and have wondered that the ships have not been set on fire by them. It is difficult to suggest a remedy. It may, however, be worth a consideration, whether the apartments of ships might not be warmed with hot air or steam.



## CHAPTER VI.

Importance of the Mediterranean command—Eventful crisis on the shores of that Sea during the last forty years — Lord Hood's reasons for resigning the command—Admiral Hotham's action with the French fleet in March and July, 1795—Disastrous results to the British fleet—Account of Nelson from Clarke and M<sup>r</sup> Arthur—His opinion of the Austrians—Subsidies to the Emperor—Introduction of Nelson to Sir John Jervis—Character of the latter—Scandalous report against the character of Nelson and his captains, supposed to have been got up by the French for the purpose of sowing dissensions between us and our allies—List of the ships under the orders of Sir John Jervis—Objects which he had to keep in view—The blockade of Toulon—Trowbridge commands the inshore squadron—High state of Order and Discipline in the Fleet—Good humour of the Sailors—Mode of Repairing the Ships at Sea—Health of the People attended to—Hospital Ship constantly inspected—Spain shows symptoms of approaching hostility—Rear-Admiral Mann sent out with a reinforcement — Anxiety of the Commander-in-chief to keep up his supplies of Stores, Provisions, and Slop-clothing—Account of the Island of Corsica from Boswell's history—Difference between the Government of the Count de Marboeuf and Sir Gilbert Elliot—Anecdote of Galleni—Lord Hood's Landing on the Island—Conflicting opinions of Collingwood and Nelson—The Strength of the Martello Towers—Siege of Bastia and Calvi—The Union between Corsica and Great Britain—Unfortunate preference shown by the British Government towards St. Domingo, to the entire loss of Corsica—Misapplication of the forces sent out under Admiral Christian—Preparations to evacuate Corsica—Secret Order of Sir John Jervis.

In taking a retrospect of the great scenes in which we have hitherto viewed the conduct and character of Sir John Jervis, it must appear to the most superficial observer that he was a man

of uncommon capacity and resources for his profession ; his knowledge of which, united to his political foresight and courage, pointed him out to the administration of Mr. Pitt, as a proper person to be entrusted with the high and responsible command of the Mediterranean fleet. Thus selected by his political opponents for a confidential post, he acquitted himself to their entire satisfaction, and acquired the highest honours to which a subject could aspire.

Of all the stations of the British navy, there are none which, in point of responsibility, can be compared with that of the Mediterranean ; and it is remarkable that the shores of that inland sea furnish us with the richest and most interesting facts of history, sacred or profane, ancient or modern. In war, in commerce, in learning, in vice, in crime, and in virtuous and heroic deeds, the coasts and islands of the Mediterranean abound with an inexhaustible fund of associations and reminiscences, for warning, for instruction, and for entertainment. Nor is the interest and political importance of those events at all diminished in our own time. On the contrary, every day appears to bring with it fresh matter for reflection and speculation ; as if some change were working, by the Great Governor

of the Universe, in which human beings are permitted to act their part, as second causes. The struggles in Turkey, both European and Asiatic, in Egypt, in Palestine, in Greece, in Spain, in Africa, all seem tending to the development of some vast design. The Catholic Church, and the majesty of the Pope, have never recovered the deadly blow that was dealt to them by the armies of the French republic in 1796. The same force, under a different dynasty, has been instrumental in humbling the Mahometan crescent at Algiers ; while Russia has been still more effectually employed in limiting the power of the sublime Porte in the East, and England, though apparently contrary to her real interests, has unwittingly lent her aid in the same cause.

We have already seen the rapid strides made by France in the south of Europe, during her republican mania. After having completely subdued her enemies on her northern frontier, and converted Holland into a part of her empire, she invaded the peaceful states of Genoa, Tuscany, Savoy, Nice, and Monaco, and planted her hated banners in the provinces of Biscay and Catalonia. Reigning paramount in all these countries, she sought to extend her influ-

ence to the coasts of Barbary, and to gain to her side the Beys of Tripoli and Tunis, and the Dey of Algiers. To a numerous and well formed fleet of ships of the line and frigates in her ports of Toulon and Brest, she added that of Spain in the ports of Cadiz and Carthagenæ ; and, while the British naval force eastward of the rock seldom exceeded sixteen sail of the line, the fleets of our enemies, had they been combined, would have amounted to forty, or more.

It was after Lord Hood had obtained possession of Corsica, and Admiral Hotham had partially defeated the French fleet, that Sir John Jervis was called upon to succeed to this important station. Lord Hood, who was an officer of transcendent merit, saw that the state of affairs in the Mediterranean required a much greater force than he had under his command ; and, before the war with Spain was declared, he returned to England in the *Victory*, to state to his majesty's government what he thought upon this subject. His Lordship's demands for more ships not having been complied with, he resigned the command ; and Admiral Hotham also had requested to be recalled, even before he had fought the battles of which the following are the particulars.

Early in March he received information that

the Toulon fleet of seventeen sail of the line was at sea, and had captured the Berwick, of 74 guns, while under jury masts. The British admiral instantly went in pursuit, and on the morning of the 12th got sight of the enemy. A chase commenced; and, on the following day, one of the French ships, the *Ça Ira*, having lost her topmasts by carrying sail, Nelson in the *Agamemnon*, with Fremantle in the *Inconstant*, got up with her and brought her to action; but the French fleet coming down to her rescue, they were compelled to relinquish their prey. On the following day, however, being the 14th, the enemy's fleet, with the crippled ship in tow, was still in sight. This unlucky ship and her consort having fallen astern, and to leeward, the British admiral had hopes of being able to cut them off, or to bring on a general action, which the French evidently wished to avoid. But, finding that the two ships must inevitably be taken, unless supported, they bore up to their relief. The *Captain* and the *Bedford*, each of 74 guns, brought the two ships to close action, placing themselves between them and the French fleet; and the van division of the British fleet coming up at this fortunate moment, the French admiral abandoned the crippled ship and her consort to their fate. It must, however, be ad-

mitted, that the people on board of her defended themselves with skill and bravery at first, and with fury and despair to the last. The *Illustrious* and *Courageux*, two of our best seventy-fours, each lost their main and mizen masts, and the other ships of the van suffered so much as to render them for a time unfit for service. The two ships captured were the *Ça Ira* of 80, and the *Censeur* of 74 guns. The first had 1300 men on board, and the latter 1000, at the commencement of the action; and each of them is said to have lost near 400 men. The number of men above their complement were soldiers, of which there were 8000 embarked in the fleet, intended for the relief or re-conquest of Corsica.

The effects of this victory were most disastrous to us. The *Illustrious*, commanded by Captain Frederick, lost many of her lower deck ports, and was in consequence compelled to run on shore to save her from foundering. We had 350 men killed and wounded, and an immense expenditure of naval stores, which could not easily be replaced.

In July following, Admiral Hotham had another rencontre with the enemy, off the Hieres Islands, which ended in the capture of the *Alcide* of 74 guns; but she caught fire and blew up half an hour after she had surrendered.

Thus every battle, though ending in victory on our side, left us worse off than before. France derived her naval stores from the Adriatic, as well as from Sweden, by the neutral bottoms and flags of that power, and the Danes; while our scanty supply came from England, and our nearest port of equipment was Gibraltar.

It was after this battle and its disastrous consequences, that Sir John Jervis was appointed to the Mediterranean command. He embarked on board the *Lively* of 32 guns, commanded by Lord Viscount Garlies; and reached Fiorenzo Bay, in the island of Corsica, late in the month of December, 1795. The very first act on his arrival showed the energy with which he was determined to proceed. He wished the frigate to be immediately moored; but it was calm, and she would not take her cable. The signal was made for boats to tow. They all assembled, and, by the admiral's directions, towed her astern into the position he wished. When she had taken out her two cables, the other anchor was let go, the boats dismissed, and the ship moored in a very few minutes. This may be considered a trifling incident, but it shows him as prompt on small, as we shall see that he was on great occasions. Some officers would have waited patiently for a breeze of

wind, to veer out the cable; but Sir John Jervis, whether in mooring a frigate, suppressing a mutiny, or attacking an enemy double his force, always acted with a promptitude and decision so well typified in his coat of arms—the eagle darting the thunderbolt.

Nelson, who was on the station long before Sir John Jervis arrived, had gained a very fair insight into the politics and conduct of the court of Austria and her generals. Sailor-like, when he began his intercourse with them, he supposed every one was as candid and as honourable as himself. He had no idea of any underhand or selfish dealings. But he soon discovered that all their pretensions were tinsel and dross, and that nothing was to be done without the *primus mobile* of continental connexion, i.e., British gold. In a letter to Mrs. Nelson, dated Vado Bay, 15th September, 1795, three months before the admiral arrived, Nelson says, “I am not quite so well pleased as I expected with this army, which is slow beyond all description; and I begin to think the emperor is anxious to touch another four millions of English money. As for the German generals, war is their trade, and peace is ruin to them; therefore, we cannot expect they should have any wish to finish the war. I have just



made some propositions to the Austrian general, to spur him on, which I believe he would have been full as well pleased had I omitted. In short, I can hardly believe he means to go farther this winter. I am now under sail on my way to Genoa, to consult with our minister on the inactivity of the Austrians, and he must take some steps to urge these people forward."

It is a curious coincidence that, at this very period, I was lieutenant of the Venus frigate, and sailed from Yarmouth roads with an immense cargo of British gold and silver coin, to subsidize these lazy and rapacious mercenaries, who were calmly smoking their pipes on the shores of Lombardy, and the banks of the Adige and the Po, while we were not only fighting their battles, but paying them with our money for looking on!

Such were the people with whom Sir John Jervis was soon to be in contact; and he speedily found that, when any thing was to be done, he never could depend on any but his own countrymen. In a subsequent letter, Nelson says, "I have been, in concert with His Majesty's ministers, very hard at work pushing the Austrian general forward, and yesterday morning I got them to make an attack that has been successful, and they have carried the centre

post on the ridge of mountains occupied by the French troops. The action lasted ten hours, and, if the general will carry another point, we shall gain thirty-three miles of country.

“Another plan is in agitation, which, if the admiral will give me transports to carry a certain number of troops, will astonish the French, and, perhaps, the English. The general, if he can be brought to move, is an officer of great abilities; but the politics of his court so constantly tie his hands, that he cannot always do what he thinks proper. However, if the army does not move, our minister, who is fixed at head-quarters, will endeavour to withhold the remainder of the emperor’s loan — say gift. This is an all-powerful motive with a German court, and one for which the lives of their subjects are held in no estimation.”—p. 252.

Thus we see Nelson, with his little band in the *Agamemnon*, assisted by Fremantle in the *Inconstant*, fighting, watching, and working, night and day, and forming a striking contrast with the clock-like motions of their Austrian allies. England did not know them at that time; but she ought to have known them. The British government was acting a brave and generous part, but they were imposed on and defrauded; and while the nation’s blood and

treasure were shed and scattered in profusion, her pretended friends and allies were laughing at her credulity, and fattening on her spoils.

I cannot resist here giving a short notice of Sir John Jervis, from Clarke and M'Arthur. It is true to the life, and I offer it without any apology.

“ Towards the end of the year 1795, Captain Nelson received an order to put himself under the command of Admiral Sir John Jervis, K.B., dated on board the *Lively*, in Gibraltar Bay, November 19. The only acquaintance which the captain of the *Agamemnon* had with this officer, was in having been introduced to him by Captain Locker, (formerly Lieutenant-Governor of Greenwich Hospital) for whom the admiral entertained the highest regard. Without presuming to discuss the merits or demerits of this great naval commander, it is necessary here to remark that Nelson found in Sir John Jervis a mind perfectly congenial to his own ; active, enterprising, and determined to persevere against all obstacles, whatever experience, or the passing events of the day, pointed out as professional or political duty. With the reputation he had gained in the various gradations of the service, was united a thorough knowledge of the politics of the British empire, and of Europe,

and keen discrimination of the character and abilities of those officers who served under him. Naturally of an ambitious disposition, and professionally a strict disciplinarian, he despised the trammels, and sometimes, perhaps, forgot the feelings, which repress common minds; and, being determined strictly to execute the important duties that were entrusted to him, he resolved that every person in the fleet should rigidly do the same. Such was the great naval officer who now superseded Vice-Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, Commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean, for the time being, after Admiral Hotham had struck his flag, and returned to England." \*

Sir John Jervis, if he wished to acquire a correct account of the affairs of Italy and Sardinia, and of the Riviera of Genoa, must of necessity have applied to Nelson; and no man was more capable of affording him the fullest information on the subject. In fact, Nelson gave his admiral a clear and full retrospect of the Vado campaign, in which the *Agamemnon* bore so prominent and so distinguished a part; and at this period it appears (Clarke and M'Arthur, p. 261) that a foul and calumnious report had found its way to Lord Grenville, the Secre-

\* Clarke and M'Arthur's *Life of Nelson*, p. 260, 8vo.

tary of State for Foreign Affairs, that Nelson, and his ten captains who were serving under him, had entered into a compact with the French generals, to allow the enemy's vessels to land their cargoes for the supply of the French army in the Rivera of Genoa. The report was too absurd to require a moment's refutation; yet Nelson was highly indignant at it, and wrote at once to Lord Grenville, demanding immediate investigation. I have no doubt that the whole story was fabricated by the French themselves, in order to sow dissensions between us and our allies; but I cannot find that Nelson addressed his complaint through the proper channel, which was evidently the commander-in-chief. The regular and official form would have been, to have demanded a court-martial on himself; but I suspect the information was anonymous, and, therefore, there could have been no prosecutor in this case. Nothing more could, in fact, be done, but what Nelson did, namely, repel the charge, and challenge investigation.

Sir John Jervis, as soon as Nelson joined him in Fiorenzo Bay, on the 19th January, 1796, offered him the St. George of 98 guns, or the Zealous of 74; but Nelson preferred his little and fast sailing Agamemnon, though she was found so rotten that she was forced to be sent

home that year, and taken into dock at Chatham; where, having been substantially repaired, she was recommissioned by Captain Fancourt, and was sent into the north seas.\*

Sir John Jervis was, as it will appear by his correspondence, perfectly aware of the value of Nelson; and it cannot be denied that two men more faithfully determined to serve their country under every difficulty, were not to be met with in any age or nation.

The following is a list of the ships and officers which were placed under Sir John Jervis's command. But, as we shall see presently, they were spread and dispersed over a very wide surface, and had many important duties to perform.

LIST OF THE FLEET UNDER THE COMMAND OF SIR JOHN JERVIS, K. B.,  
ADMIRAL OF THE BLUE, &C., IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, 1796.  
FROM SCHOMBERG'S NAVAL CHRONOLOGY.

	GUNS.	
Victory . . . . .	100	Flag; 1st Captain, R. Calder, 2nd, ditto, George Grey.
Britannia . . . . .	100	S. Peard.
Princess Royal . . . . .	98	Robert Linzee, Vice-Admiral of the White; Captain, J. C. Purvis.
Barfleur . . . . .	98	Vice-Admiral the Hon. Wm. Waldegrave; Captain, J. R. Dacres.
*Windsor Castle . . . . .	98	Robert Mann, Rear-Admiral of the Red; Captain, Edward O'Brien.
Blenheim . . . . .	98	Captain, Thomas Lenth Frederick.

\* I was appointed fourth lieutenant of her in the month of October of the same year.—Ed.

	GUNS.	
St. George . . . . .	98	Vice-Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, soon after removed to chief command at Jamaica; Captain, T. Foley.
Ça Ira (prize) . . . . .	80	Captain, C. D. Pater. This ship was burnt by accident in Fiorenzo Bay.
Gibraltar . . . . .	80	J. Pakenham. Struck on the Pearl Rock, December, 1796, and ordered home in consequence.
•Audacious . . . . .	74	Davidge Gould.
Bombay Castle . . . . .	74	Thomas Sotheby. Lost in December, 1796, going into the Tagus.
Captain . . . . .	74	T. S. Smith.
Courageux . . . . .	74	Benjamin Hallowell. Lost on the night, 9th December, 1796, on the coast of Barbary.
Culloden . . . . .	74	Thomas Trowbridge.
•Cumberland . . . . .	74	B. S. Rowley.
•Defence . . . . .	74	Thomas Wells.
Egmont . . . . .	74	John Sutton.
Excellent . . . . .	74	Cuthbert Collingwood.
•Saturn . . . . .	74	James Douglas.
•Terrible . . . . .	74	George Campbell.
•Hector . . . . .	74	Robert Montagu.
Zealous . . . . .	74	Lord Hervey; afterwards (in May) Samuel Hood.
Goliath . . . . .	74	Sir Charles Knowles.
Agamemnon . . . . .	64	Horatio Nelson.
Diadem . . . . .	64	Charles Tyler.
Chichester . . . . .	44	R. D. Fancourt.
La Minerve . . . . .	38	George H. Toury.
L'Aigle . . . . .	38	Samuel Hood.
Argo (two decks) . . . . .	44	J. S. Hall.
Flora . . . . .	36	Robert Gambier Middleton.
Inconstant . . . . .	36	Thomas Fremantle.
Romulus . . . . .	36	George Hope.
Emerald . . . . .	36	V. C. Berkeley.
Blanche . . . . .	36	D'Arcy Preston.
Blonde . . . . .	32	William Pierrepont.
Castor . . . . .	32	Rowley Bulted.

	GUNS.	
Lively. . . . .	32	Lord Viscount Garlies.
Lowestoffe . . . . .	32	R. Plampin.
Meleager . . . . .	32	G. Cockburn.
La Mulette . . . . .	32	R. Goddard.
La Mignonne . . . . .	32	R. W. Miller.
Southampton . . . . .	32	James Macnamara.
Boston . . . . .	32	James Nichol Morris.
Terpsichore . . . . .	32	Richard Bowen.
Niger . . . . .	32	Edward James Foote.
Cyclops . . . . .	28	William Hotham.
Dido . . . . .	28	Henry Hotham.
Nemesis . . . . .	28	Samuel Hood Linzee.
Tartar . . . . .	28	Hon. Charles Elphinstone; now Ad- miral Fleming.
Amphitrite . . . . .	24	Hon. Charles Herbert.
L'Unité . . . . .	24	
L'Utile . . . . .	24	Charles Lydiard.
Ariadne . . . . .	24	
La Bellette . . . . .	24	T. Scofield.
L'Eclair . . . . .	24	H. Leycester.
La Moselle . . . . .	24	
La Poulette . . . . .	24	J. Edwards.
La Sardine . . . . .	24	E. Killiwick.
La Sincere . . . . .	24	J. Sauce.
Speedy (brig) . . . . .	14	Thomas Elphinstone.
Peterell . . . . .	18	Charles Ogle.
Cameleon . . . . .	18	R. R. Bowyer.
Raven . . . . .	18	John Giffard.
Fortune . . . . .	16	Lord Mark Kerr.
Serapis (store-ship) . . . . .	22	Henry Duncan, Master.
Dromedary (ditto) . . . . .	22	J. Harrison.
Alliance (ditto) . . . . .	22	W. Cumming.
Gorgon (ditto) . . . . .	22	Edward Tyrrell.
Camel (ditto) . . . . .	22	Edward Rotherham.
Dolphin (hospital) . . . . .		Richard Retalick.
Cornet (fire-ship) . . . . .		Robert Redmill.
Le Tarleston . . . . .	14	C. Brisbane.
L'Aurore (prison-ship) . . . . .		Lieutenant William Bolton.
La Mutine (cutter) . . . . .	14	Lieutenant H. West.
Resolution (ditto) . . . . .		Lieutenant E. H. Columbine.



	SONS.	
Swift . . . . .	14	Lieutenant Blake.
Le Vaneau . . . . .	6	Lieutenant John Gourlay. Lost in Porto Ferrajo.
Assurance (armed transport)	22	R. Zookey.

The vessels marked with a \*, were detached under Rear-Admiral Manby.

With this fleet Sir John Jervis had to watch that of France in Toulon; to counteract their operations along the whole line of the south coast of Europe; to protect our own Levant trade, as well as to afford succour to our allies, —if the Tuscans, the Neapolitans, and the Genoese, could deserve that appellation, since it was well known that the influence, if not the armies of France, domineered over the very hearts as well as the heads of these governments. He had also, at the same time, to keep an eye on the princes of Barbary; and while he conciliated them by well-timed presents and respectful language, he let them see, and made them sensible, that he had the power to check and to awe, or even to chastise them, in case of need.

The Corsicans, like all semi-barbarous people, are a fickle and uncertain race. The constitution which we had given them they neither knew the value of, nor cared to inquire into it: all they knew was, that they hated the French; they therefore helped us to expel them, and,

having done that, they turned against their deliverers ;—most probably with the twofold design of again reinstating themselves in the good opinion of the French, whose successes in Italy alarmed them ; and also with a view of plundering the rich stores which they saw every day landed from our ships, besides the private property, of which there was a very large amount belonging to the English.

Be the cause of their change of opinion, and determined hostility, what it might, it was evident that great firmness and decision of character were required on the part of the commanders-in-chief, to keep the natives in subjection, as long as it might be necessary to hold that island.

Sardinia, also, a rich and beautiful island, lying due south of Corsica, from which it is only separated by the Straits of Bonifacio, demanded also great attention, in order to prevent the enemy using those harbours, and from thence annoying our trade. From those two contiguous islands we could not derive any supplies of provisions, the natives being too ignorant to cultivate their land, and too lawless to allow the industrious to reap the profits of their labour.

No sooner had Sir John Jervis settled himself

in his new command; than he made the enemy fully sensible of his vigilance. The blockade of Toulon was the most vigorous and effectual which had ever been established before an enemy's port. Early in the spring of 1796, he took his station off the Hieres Islands, on the coast of Provence, about three leagues eastward of Toulon. His fleet was always kept in regular order of sailing, in two lines; his own ship, the *Victory*, on the weather-bow of the leading ship of the weather division. Trowbridge, in talent second to none but Nelson, at that time commanded the *Culloden*. Sir John Jervis, who was remarkable for discovering the qualities of his officers, and applying them to the fittest uses, was not long in finding suitable employment for the active energy of Captain Trowbridge, whose perseverance, seamanship, and resources in the hour of need, were most admirable. He was entrusted with the distinguished command of the in-shore squadron. This consisted of four sail of the line, which were kept constantly between Cape Sicie and the Hieres Islands; so that the port of Toulon was almost hermetically sealed by the "active commodore." No weather could induce the admiral to depart from his post, nor was there any relaxation to this vigorous system. How he victualled and

kept his ships in order during this long and monotonous cruize, is scarcely to be comprehended; but the fact is certain, that they were kept in the most perfect order, and what was still more wonderful, the men were in excellent health and good humour, and in the highest state of discipline.

The British consuls in those states where the French influence had begun to be felt, were constantly stimulated to their duty, and enjoined on every occasion to assert the rights of their countrymen to obtain such supplies of food, and other necessities, as they might require. Besides these, the admiral had secret agents, whom he employed in very difficult and important services, and kept up such a chain of communication, as enabled him to obtain the earliest information of all the movements of the wily enemy. Whenever a transport joined the fleet, the mode of clearing her was simple and expeditious. The ship of the line first on the list for receiving supplies was ordered to take her in tow; and this, if the weather was fair, she did, without quitting her station in the line. Her boats were instantly hoisted out, and veered astern, with coils of rope, laying alongside the transport, on both sides, till they were filled; they were then hauled ahead, emptied, and returned in:

the same manner, until the demands were satisfied. She then cast off the transport, which went to the next ship in succession, and so on, until the whole was accomplished. Nor did this operation in any manner suspend the movements and evolutions of the fleet. With the same system of regularity the commander-in-chief conducted the repairs of the ships, as if they had been in a dock yard. He caused a list of all the artificers to be sent to him from every ship under his command, as also a report of the defects of each ship; and whichever appeared to have the most urgent wants, the signal was made for her to receive the requisite number of workmen from the fleet. She then hove-to for that purpose, and having taken them on board, resumed her station, while her repairs went on with the utmost speed, and in the most effectual manner, under the superintendence of the carpenter of the flag-ship. By this wise and judicious arrangement he brought the whole body of the artificers upon one ship; and, finally, having made good every defect, he ended by giving her, what he humorously called a "titi-vating," *i. e.* a coat of paint fore and aft, and she had all the appearance of being just out of port.

The health of the crews was preserved by

attention to their food, and by great care that they were not overworked. They were kept at three watches; one watch being sufficient on common occasions, and two watches on any emergency; while the third was always left in repose, to mend their clothes, or amuse themselves as they liked.

An hospital-ship, as was the practice with Lord Howe in the Channel, always attended the fleet. This was usually a 44, upon two decks; the only use that vile class of ships could ever be applied to, and for which they were admirably adapted. This hospital ship always kept her station on the weather-beam of the admiral, supplied with every comfort, and even luxury, for the use of the sick, who quickly recovered, under the skilful care and kind treatment of the medical man in charge of them. Thus the ships had no serious cases on board, all of that description being immediately transferred, in cots, to the hospital, and returned to their proper ships when cured. The hospital, by order of the commander-in-chief, was constantly inspected by the flag-officers and captains, and their respective surgeons were sent, from time to time, to survey the patients; and those who were found unfit for service, or to whom the climate was injurious, were sent to England

by the earliest conveyance, care being taken to supply them with abundance of fruit, vegetables, and fresh provisions, for the voyage.

Thus, while the indefatigable chief paid every attention to the great calls of duty, he was not unmindful of the lesser ones; and the seamen, while they knew they could not depart from the rules of discipline, were at the same time made sensible that they were the objects of the utmost solicitude; and while the most vigorous and effectual blockade was established, the labour was neither oppressive to the men, nor expensive to the state. The joining of transports was an event which the sailors always hailed with delight; they soon had the selvagee strop round the horns of the fat Tuscan oxen (which the Jacks used to call "grey friars"); and the slaughtering of them afforded a cheerful meal, which was always gratefully received.

A court-martial was an event of very rare occurrence, and the greatest harmony prevailed among all ranks and classes. They felt assured that they were under the command of a skilful and daring chief, who would not only lead them to victory, but preserve them in a state of health and discipline to ensure success.

It is hoped that the foregoing observations will not be deemed irrelevant, by those who are

deeply interested in the welfare of the British navy;—and what Englishman is not? They are also intended as an introduction to those valuable letters, which, being addressed to every class of persons, from the prince to the lower ranks in the service, will be found a compendium of knowledge, and a guide to our future officers, under almost any contingency.

As the conduct of the court of Spain became daily more questionable, Rear-Admiral Mann had been sent out to reinforce Sir John Jervis, with a squadron, consisting of the following ships:—

Zealous . . . 74	{ Rear-Admiral Mann. Captain C. Matson.
Victory . . . 100	John Knight.
Cumberland . . 74	B. S. Rowley.
Audacious . . . 74	William Shields.
Defence . . . 74	Thomas Wells.

The natural anxiety of mind of the commander-in-chief was greatly increased by the probability of a rupture between that power and Great Britain. Our merchantmen were taking in or discharging their cargoes in the ports of the Peninsula, while an embargo was hourly expected to be laid on; at the instigation of France, the homeward and outward bound trade of Britain were assembling in the Bay of



Gibraltar, waiting for convoy, or to know the result of events. This was a great evil, as the supplies required by these vessels drew much of the subsistence from the town and garrison, which were entirely dependent on the coast of Barbary ; for, even in times of profound peace, Spain was ever jealous of intercourse with the rock, in fear of the contagion of plague ; but much more so, when the interchange of boats and merchandize became so frequent between us and the coast of Africa.

The husbanding of canvass, cordage, and other sea-stores, was ever uppermost in the chief's mind ; but a scarcity of these was not all he had to fear. His want of slop-clothing for his crews in winter time was a serious evil, and his provisions and bread began to fail him. These articles could only be procured from England, and are forcibly adverted to in his letter to Admiral Mann.

Harassed with cares so peculiarly his own, his attention and deepest solicitude were directed, at the same time, to the protection of the British merchants in the Genocse and Tuscan states, who had been recently threatened, in the summer of 1796, by the French armies over-running Piedmont. Sir John Jervis confided his anxiety on these points to his most intrepid

officers, Nelson, Trowbridge, Fremantle, Peard; and Cockburn. Among these, Nelson had been previously noticed by Admiral Hotham, who was not a stranger to his rare merit; but he soon became still better known to Sir John Jervis, who fully appreciated the value of such an assistant, and who showed his own knowledge of men, by placing him in a position best calculated to display his great talents.

As the possession and evacuation of the island of Corsica form a very important part of the subject of the following pages, I think it may be acceptable to many of my readers to give an outline of its civil and political state, for which I am chiefly indebted to Mr. Boswell, the friend and biographer of Dr. Johnson.

Pliny the Elder has given us a short but very accurate account of the geography of Corsica.—“In the Ligurian sea, but nearer to Tuscany than Liguria, is Corsica, which the Greeks called Cynus; it extendeth from north to south, and is about one hundred and fifty miles in length, for the most part fifty in breadth, and three hundred and twenty-two miles in circumference. It hath thirty-three states and two colonies; Mariana, founded by Marius, and Aleria, founded by the Dictator Sylla.”

Of these thirty-three states not above five can

now be traced. The philosopher and poet Seneca was banished to Corsica by order of the Emperor Severus or Caracalla, under a suspicion of having been a partaker in the guilt of the Empress Julia, the wife of the first and mother of the second.

Seneca gave no very flattering account of an island which to him was a prison. A tower on the northern promontory is or was shown in 1768, as *Il torre di Seneca*. But Mr. Boswell vindicates the island from the aspersions of the disconsolate poet, and says it is in reality a most agreeable island, to which the ancient Greeks gave the name of Calista, on account of its beauty.

Mr. Boswell says that Corsica is remarkably well furnished with good harbours, but I am inclined to differ with him in this point, in which he certainly was an incompetent judge. Innumerable small harbours and creeks, for the shelter of coasting vessels, no doubt abound on three-fourths of its circumference, but very few of them are capable of affording safe anchorage for ships of war. The principal ports are San Fiorenzo, Isola Rosa, Calvi, and Ajacio on the west. On the south it has Bonifacio; and on the east, Vechio, Bastia, and Macinajo.

The Gulf of San Fiorenzo runs about fifteen

miles due south into the island, but the water is deep and the bottom rocky. Fiorenzo Bay is, however, a good anchorage, and Mr. Boswell describes Calvi as a large and excellent harbour. Ajacio is wide and commodious. Our ships of war resorted there to refit, and our naval arsenal was established at that port. Bonifacio is fitter for trade than for ships of war. Porto Vecchio was never entered by our ships, that I know of, during the revolutionary war. It is said to be spacious and secure, but its contiguity to a swamp renders it sickly, and therefore unsafe for the crews of our ships. But Nelson's opinion of it (Clarke and M'Arthur, p. 352, 8vo. edit.) is worth attending to. He feared it might become a rendezvous for Corsican and French renegadoes.

In 1764, the French government sent over the Count de Marboëuf as military governor. Boswell says he exercised his authority with prudence and humanity; and, as I have been assured that the general was in the habit of hanging ten men every market-day, on a gibbet extending across the road, only sufficiently high to admit of the market people passing under their feet, perhaps he found them as difficult to govern as his remote successor, Sir Gilbert Elliot; and it is most probable that the British governor lost

his power and influence among these barbarians, because he attempted to govern them by love and not by terror.

“Miserable Corsica,” says Collingwood in his letter to his friend Blackett, “miserable Corsica produces nothing but rebels and officers. . . Viceroy, secretaries of state, and governors we have in plenty, and the military establishment we had until lately was excessive even to a farce. In return for all this we get wood and water. The favourable reports which have been made of this island are shameful falsehoods, and show how blind people are to the truth when it interferes with their interests or checks their vanity.”

A little further on he says, “The sums of money which have been squandered among them is immense. The embassy to Algiers to ransom some Corsicans cost us £60,000; the rebellion about the taxes, 70 or £80,000 more. I wish heartily that the time of our leaving it were come. \* \* \* Sir John Jervis is indefatigable in keeping this station, and, while we keep it, the Mediterranean is a sea only for our friends; yet I fear our friends will have nothing to do here soon.”

Yet, again, we find a difference of opinion on the subject of Corsica, between Nelson and his friend Collingwood. The former (according to

Clarke and M<sup>r</sup> Arthur, p. 151, 8vo. edit.) says, "Corsica is a wonderfully fine island;" and at p. 155 he says, "If we take Corsica, of which I have not the smallest doubt, I hope we shall keep it."

I lament that his wishes had not decided the policy of our government, and I have pretty strong evidence to show that it was not intended it should have been given up. But, like Java, I fear it fell because no one would read what was written about it. At p. 205, Nelson says afterwards, in a letter to Mrs. Nelson, "this day twelve months our troops landed here to attempt the conquest of the island, at least of those parts which the French were in possession of; and, however lightly the acquisition of Corsica may be considered in England, yet I take upon me to say it was a measure founded on great wisdom, and during the war must be ever of the most essential service to us, and be very detrimental to our enemies. \* \* \*

"Corsica has always supplied Toulon with all the strait timber beams, decks, and sides of their ships. They are now deprived of that supply, which would have enabled them by this time to have built a small fleet; besides, the Corsican tar and hemp formed by no means an inconsiderable source for the dock yard at Toulon.

Moreover, all our trade, with that of our allies, is obliged to make the coasts of this island, the ports of which would have been so full of row-gallies that no commerce could have been carried on, nor could our men-of-war have prevented the evil; for half the twenty-four hours is calm, when these vessels would take the merchantmen, though the whole of the British navy were in sight. So much for the value of Corsica:—I have done. The recollection of one short year brings it to my mind; it was Lord Hood's plan, and it was accomplished chiefly by British seamen."

I have given on this subject the opinion of two of the ablest captains in the British navy. At that period they were intimate friends, and both of them with every faculty sharpened by the extraordinary and interesting events passing around them; and while I have the highest opinion of Collingwood's judgment in most things, I own I incline strongly to the opinion of Nelson on the subject of Corsica.

I have, during a long series of years, contemplated our evacuation of Corsica, and our pertinacious defence of St. Domingo at the same time, as the most questionable part of Mr. Pitt's colonial policy.

Many officers in both professions, I am aware,

set little value on Corsica as a possession whereby to make any return to the parent state ; and, perhaps, if we could have deprived France of any of the advantages accruing from the occupation of an island of such extent, with such resources for ship-timber, we might have given it up without regret ; but when we consider that, besides these advantages, it enabled our great rival to extend her chain, or barrier, across the Mediterranean from north to south, to intercept our Levant trade, and to command the high road to India through Egypt, we should have paused before we relinquished our hold of Corsica ; and it will be seen, in perusing the correspondence of Sir John Jervis, that his majesty's ministers were sensible of their error when too late.

As soon as Sir John Jervis was certain of the hostility of Spain, he repaired to Fiorenzo Bay, to consult with the viceroy, on the best means of defending the new conquest, or, if that were inadvisable, the safest mode of leaving it again in the hands of the ferocious and uncivilized natives. The resources in the hands of both the chiefs were certainly inadequate to the defence of such a position. It therefore became them to prepare for that evacuation which,



without powerful and effectual aid from home, they saw was inevitable.

One of the first acts of the admiral after his arrival on the station was to give out the following secret order :—

*By Sir John Jervis, K.B., Admiral of the Blue,  
Commander-in-Chief.*

(SECRET.)

Whereas, the due performance of the plan of battle concerted between us may be essential to the success of his Majesty's arms, you are, in the event of my being slain or disabled in action with the enemy, hereby authorized and required to continue the direction of the fleet, by the signals necessary to enforce and complete such plan and evolution, lest the advantages which will probably result from a full completion thereof be lost to my king and country. But, having fulfilled the same to the best of your judgment, you are to take the first favourable opportunity of making known the accident, by signal, to the commander in the second post; and, having so done, you are to

repeat his signals, keeping my flag flying while in presence of the enemy.

Given on board the Victory, at sea,  
the 1st of January, 1796.

J. JERVIS.

To Robert Calder, Esq.,  
First Capt. of H.M.S. Victory,  
Capt. of the Fleet, &c., &c.

By command of the Admiral,  
G. PURVIS.\*

Not to be opened till the flag, half white, half black, *i.e.*, the white stripe uppermost, is hoisted on board the Admiral, that the commander-in-chief is slain or disabled from continuing the command. The commander in the second post is to take upon himself the command and government of the fleet, although the flag of the commander-in-chief remains flying.

J. JERVIS.

To Vice-Admirals { Sir Hyde Parker,  
Robert Linzee, Esq.

\* Secret instructions to the same effect were repeated to Sir William Parker, and Sir Roger Curtis, 1st June, 1798.

## CHAPTER VII.

Value and interest of real Letters—Beneficial change in Dock yard Regulations—Letters to Commissioner Coffin—Duties of Naval Commissioner not well defined—The office under that name discontinued—To Rear-Admiral Mann—To Consul Udney—To the Right Hon. William Wyndham—To Chevalier Acton—To Sir William Hamilton—To the Right Hon. William Wyndham—To the same—To Consul Udney—To Sir Gilbert Elliot, afterwards Lord Minto—To Commodore Nelson—To Consul Gregory—To the Viceroy of Corsica—To Nelson—To Consul Gregory—To Mr. Wyndham—To Sir William Hamilton.

WE now arrive at that period of Sir John Jervis's career when his own letters may be made the medium of recording and illustrating his various public acts and operations—a medium which it would be well if the biographers of really distinguished men like him would oftener and more copiously use, in place of their own crude, or flat, or inefficient relations. To readers who are qualified to appreciate and benefit by works of the class to which this aspires to belong—works which, if they are

not history themselves, furnish the best materials for it—there is nothing so acceptable as the actual letters which have emanated from the hand of the party treated of, at the very moment when the subject of them was present to his thoughts. They render all second-hand relations insipid by comparison, even when (as may be deemed the case with a few of the following) the topics themselves may be of minor importance.

The following letter to Commissioner Coffin shows the great inconvenience to which the service was exposed, by the commissioners in the dock yards, especially on foreign stations, having a power and control over the king's stores, quite independent of the commanders-in-chief of the fleet. The new arrangement—by which the person having charge of the naval arsenal is a flag-officer, generally subordinate to the one holding the chief command—has entirely obviated that serious hindrance to the service; and the union of the official duties relating to the same subject at home, under one head at Somerset House, will, I hope, be found conducive to the same excellent purpose. A bill was brought into Parliament by Sir James Graham, when first lord of the Admiralty, in

1834-5, by which the Navy Board was done away with altogether, and the office taken into the hands of the Board of Admiralty.

*To Commissioner Coffin.*

Victory, off Toulon, 1st Jan., 1796.

My dear Sir,

I accept your assurance of not intending to offer any personal incivility to me, in the opposition you give to the measures I have directed as essentially necessary to carry on the public service, under the peculiar circumstances of the war, and the critical situation of the island of Corsica; but unless you relax in your determination not to accommodate any other branch, particularly that of the hospital, where I hope your humanity will interpose, I do not see the possibility of going on.

With respect to the *Temeraire*, I have written to the Admiralty that she should be ordered to Ajaccio, to be equipped under your direction, in a manner suitable to the importance of the object. *L'Eloise* would have been appointed, had not this purchase been made; so that I consider the equipment of her, to all intents and purposes, as a ship of his Majesty. In this instance, a war with Algiers may be occasioned

by any delay. I therefore request you will reconsider my application, and pay attention to it.

Captain Calder had written details relative to the store-ships, before the Gibraltar communicated with us, the object of which is to have one of his Majesty's store-ships, with an assortment of stores adapted to our wants at sea, prepared to cruise with us; another to be placed at San Fiorenzo, and a third at Ajaccio; it appearing to me very dangerous to deposit them on shore; and this distribution will best answer the exigencies of the fleet.

To show how extremely desirous I am to take every transaction which happened at Corsica in good part, I make no observation upon the manner of expelling the hospital stores from the seminary; being convinced you acted from principle, although your zeal may have produced some impropriety in the conduct of those who carried your orders into execution.

Allow me to repeat the anxious concern I feel for the safety of your person, and to express a hope that you will not put it to the hazard of a Corsican shot. Be assured I am,

Very sincerely your's,

J. JERVIS.

*To Rear-Admiral Mann.*

Victory, in St. Fiorenzo Bay, 19th Jan., 1796.

Sir,

By the Resolution cutter, which arrived here on the 15th, I have received your letters of the 23rd and 28th ultimo, giving an account of your proceedings since the date of those received by the Barfleur; and I have to express my full approbation of the exertions made by the captains and officers of your squadron, under your superintendence, after the damage received off Cadiz. The defects and deficiencies of the frigates under your direction bear a proportion to those in these seas, where the utmost frugality is, of necessity, used, in consequence of the want of stores and artificers.

With respect to the purchase or hire of any vessel for the purpose of cruising in the Gut, I must inform you that it is out of my power to authorize such a measure. The gun-boat, manned out of the prison ships, may be employed to run to and from Tangier; but she is certainly unfit to cruise at this season. The Resolution cutter is the best adapted to that service, and Lieutenant Columbine\* has my

\* The late Captain W. H. Columbine.

orders accordingly, unless you have other material use for her.

I am of opinion that no expense should be incurred on account of the Mullett, until the Board of Admiralty, to which I have referred her situation, signifies its directions thereon.

At this distance, and without authentic intelligence of an hostile disposition on the part of Spain, it is impossible for me to give you other instructions than those you are in possession of. Should Richery's squadron return to Toulon, you will, of course, make the best of your way to join me here. Mr. Duff will doubtless send you out information of his sailing, with the best judgment he can form of his destination. The last intelligence from Toulon, copies of which I enclose, is all the information I am master of. I have to thank you for what you have furnished me with, enclosed in your letters; and if you will collect the trade from Cadiz at Gibraltar, they may avail themselves of the first convoy for England. This is the only answer I can give to their petition, and to Mr. Consul Duff's recommendation of it. It was always my intention that the Castor and Blonde should be considered as attached to your squadron; and the Dido, with the Möselle, stationed for the convoy of the garri-



son victuallers, and the protection of the trade passing to and fro in the Gut: should, however, the Blonde have left you to join me, the Cyclops may supply her place. The recommendation of any officer you appoint to act, let the vacancy be what it may, shall go through me to Lord Spencer. I did not interfere with those that happened before my arrival, from *motives of delicacy*.\*

L'Aigle, the Cyclops, and La Moselle, with two victuallers, must long ere this have joined, and relieved your anxiety about provisions. I trust the two former are in such a state of equipment that I may soon expect their return here.

We are quite destitute of slop clothes and beds here. I urged the necessity of large supplies before I left England, of which I conclude you will shortly be in possession, on the store-ship's arrival. In supplying your squadron, I must desire you will order no more to be taken than a proportionate quantity to the number of ships up the Mediterranean. I have since written to the Navy Board for a further quantity.

I am, Sir, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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\* No greediness of patronage was ever discovered in the public or private conduct of Lord St. Vincent, and, no man, I firmly believe, ever came out of office with cleaner hands.

Captain M'Namara, of the Southampton, seems to have been unfortunate in firing at a Sicilian vessel to bring her to, as the shot struck one of the people on board of her, and killed him. This accident produced the following letter to Mr. Consul Udney:—

*To John Udney, Esq. British Consul at Leghorn.*

Victory, in Leghorn Bay, 16th February, 1796.

Sir,

I am very much concerned for the fatal accident which has happened to a subject of his Sicilian Majesty, recited in a letter from the Neapolitan Vice-Consul at Porto Ferraro, to the governor of that place; a copy of which you did me the favour to enclose in your letter of last night. I request you will assure the governor, and all the parties, that I feel the most poignant regret upon the occasion; and though I am persuaded Captain Macnamara neither intended to offer an indignity to the flag of his Sicilian Majesty, nor to injure the vessel or crew, I will not fail to call upon him the moment he returns from the service he is at present engaged in, to answer the charge brought against him by the afore-mentioned Vice-Consul.

It becomes me in the mean time to remark upon the hasty interpretation given by him to

every part of the transaction, without reflecting on the number of pirates which infest the neighbouring coasts, under all colours and disguises,—equally to the prejudice of the Neapolitan and British navigation; and that it is not less the duty of all officers to speak with every thing they meet upon the sea, and to ascertain whether they are friends or enemies, than to obtain intelligence. Captain Macnamara not having made any report of this affair, I must suspend my judgment until I receive his reply to the representation; all I can say is that the subjects of his Sicilian Majesty, and their property, are held as sacred in the fleet I have the honour to command, as those of the king my royal master, and I shall seize every opportunity to manifest it.

I am, Sir, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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*To the Hon. W. F. Wyndham.*

Victory, at Sea, 23d March, 1796.

Sir,

On the 18th, I had the honour to receive your letter of the 8th instant, communicating the conversation which passed between the Marquis Manfredina and the French minis-

ter at Florence, and I take the earliest opportunity to assure you that I will exert every means in my power, to prevent the French fleet from operating against any part of the Grand Duke's dominions ; but, with regard to the entry of their troops into the Tuscan territory, that event must depend entirely upon the force the allied powers may bring into the field to frustrate such an enterprise.

I have the honour to be, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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*To the Chevalier Acton.*

Victory, in San Florenzo Bay, 2nd April, 1796.

Dear Sir,

On the arrival of the Peterell, a few days ago, I had the honour to receive your letter of the 22nd of March. I had, as you imagined, been informed of the extraordinary conversation between the Marquis Manfredina and M. Myot, by Mr. Wyndham. The French will not hesitate to invade Tuscany, or the territory of any other neutral state likely to furnish plunder, regardless as they are of the principles which have hitherto governed civilised nations. Offensive operations can alone defeat their designs, and to this effect, I trust, General Beau-

Heu will take the field early, with a powerful army. When in possession of Vado, there will be little difficulty in conveying your thirteen battalions and their cannon. Uninformed as I am of his movements, all I can say is, that no exertion on my part shall be wanting to promote the operations of the campaign. It is needless to observe how useful the Neapolitan xebeques, galliottes, &c. will be in this warfare. I learn from Captain Nelson that he has written to Sir William Hamilton upon the subject; and the admirable disposition shewn by his Sicilian Majesty, to sustain the coalesced powers, admits of no doubt that he will be pleased to furnish what he can spare from the defence of his own coasts.

The Tancredi anchored here yesterday, and from the report of the physician to the fleet (enclosed) I am impelled by the dictates of humanity to send her to Naples immediately. To the want of bedding and warm clothing during the winter season, may be ascribed this dreadful infectious fever, which is not to be eradicated without sending the people on shore and fumi-gating the ship. When the sun approaches a little nearer to us, I shall be under no apprehensions for the crews of the other ships. Their being copper-sheathed is a very pleasant cir-

cumstance, and I look forward to their junction with impatience.

I have great obligation to the Chevalier Caraccioli\* for giving protection to the Trade bound from Leghorn to Naples, and Civita Vecchia lately; the escort having been found too weak to encounter the French privateers in the Channel of Piombino, without his aid; and I have every other reason to be satisfied with his conduct, during the short time the Tancredi has been under my orders, and I greatly lament the necessity I am under to part with him.

I have the honour to be, Sir, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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*To Sir William Hamilton.*

Victory, at Sea, 26th April, 1796.

Sir,

I am very much obliged to your Excellency for your letter of the 10th, enclosing a very satisfactory communication from General Acton, which I herewith return. The General's remarks upon the proposition made by Mr.

\* This unfortunate man was tried by a court-martial, and hanged at the yard-arm of a Neapolitan frigate in the Bay of Naples.—See Brenton's Naval History, vol. ii.

Drake, touching the three thousand men to be kept embarked for desultory expeditions, are judicious. When General Beaulieu obtains a decided superiority in the field, (which we may look for, now that the subtle devices of the enemy are discovered, and any further ill effect from them frustrated) the flotilla of his Sicilian Majesty will be of very great use. I am not competent to decide whether Port Especia is a secure place for their reception, in the present state of the war in the Rivera of Genoa. An efficient squadron, under the command of Commodore Nelson, will be constantly cruising for their protection, and every succour given to them consistent with our means; which in truth the glorious efforts of his Sicilian Majesty justly entitle them to; and as Leghorn and San Fiorenzo are at no great distance, and may be safely resorted to, I trust that the late advantages gained by the French in the neighbourhood of Ceva have not checked the ardour manifested by the court of Naples.

I have the honour to be, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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*To the Hon. W. F. Wyndham.*

Victory, off Toulon, May 5th, 1796.

Sir,

I am honoured with your Excellency's letter of 28th April. Having received no report from Captain Ogle relative to the firing at La Minerve, I can only state from Mr. Udney's letter that the event did happen ; but I am unacquainted with any specific declaration made in my name, concerning the prisoners taken in Le Tonnerre. I therefore apply the whole as an insult to His Majesty's flag, and which, if repeated, will be repelled ; for few officers can preserve the temper and moderation observed by Captain Ogle\* upon the occasion ; and I trust your Excellency will find no difficulty in obtaining a disavowal of this hostile act, and such other concession as you may judge best suited to times and circumstances. I have in a degree referred the act of piracy committed by L'Horrible, to the Viceroy of Corsica, who is very conversant in the law of nations ; and I hope I do not ask any thing improper in requesting you will take no steps upon that transaction until his decision is made known ; especially as

\* The present Vice-Admiral, Sir Charles Ogle, Bart. K.C.B.



I have expressed a wish that the Corsican tribunal may be found competent to bring the parties to a trial.

I have the honour to be, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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*To the Hon. W. F. Wyndham.*

Victory, off Toulon, 5th May, 1796.

Sir,

I very much admire the manner in which your Excellency has treated the subject of the outrage committed upon His Majesty's colours, within the limits of the port of Leghorn; and I have read with indignation the language of the Tuscan minister. I have, in addition, to complain of two flagrant violations of the neutrality which ought to exist between the two courts; the fort of Leghorn having fired shot at His Majesty's ship *La Minerve*, and a transport under her convoy, and at His Majesty's ships *Vaneau*, *L'Eclair*, and *Fox cutter*.

After having pledged my word of honour to the late Governor Sevatti, that I would be answerable for the conduct of His Majesty's ships under my command, I little expected so soon to have heard of an insult bordering on

hostility, committed against the British nation, not to be endured for a moment. The crew of L'Horrible are, I conceive, to be considered as pirates to all intents and purposes, and to be tried as such. If there were any consistency in the French government, the minister of that republic at Florence would be the first to demand it. There being no tribunal in Tuscany competent to the decision of an act of piracy, I can scarce believe, because the law of nations, upon a crime so destructive to commerce and navigation, is equally binding in all civilised countries. Mr. Udney informs me that he has explained to your Excellency the insult offered to His Majesty's ship *La Minerve*, and I enclose a copy of a letter just received from Captain Dixon,\* of His Majesty's ship *L'Eclair*, and I request you will have the goodness to make the strongest remonstrances against those unjustifiable proceedings.

I have the honour to be, Sir, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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\* The late Captain John William Taylor Dixon, who was drowned in the *Apollo* frigate, near Mondego Bay, on the coast of Portugal, in 1805. I was first lieutenant with him when he commanded the *Raven* sloop of war, and we were cast away in the river Elbe, February 4th, 1798.

*To John Udney, Esq.*

Victory, off Toulon, 14th June, 1796.

Sir,

I thank you for the several letters and their enclosures by L'Eclair and La Minerve; and as your post seems very precarious, I wish, in future, that my despatches for England, for Mr. Drake and Colonel Graham, should be sent to Mr. Wyndham.

The Viscountess de Bernis, great niece to the worthy cardinal of that name, claims a trunk of wearing apparel on board a Venetian ship sent into Leghorn by one of this squadron—probably the *Captain*, 74; and, as I am very desirous to show respect to the lady, I beg you will make every exertion to restore it, and inform Mr. Jenkins at Rome that you have done so.

I am, Sir, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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Lord St. Vincent never omitted any opportunity of showing respect and attention to females, whether of high or low rank in society. He justly felt that a nation is ever happy, refined, and prosperous, in proportion to the character and influence of the female portion of its

population, and the care and attention with which they are treated by our sex.

*To Sir Gilbert Elliot.*

Victory, off Toulon, 25th June, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I trouble you with a few more prisoners by the Southampton, as it is of great importance to prevent such excellent seamen as these from getting back to Toulon; for the crews of the *Nemesis*, *La Sardine*, *Postillon*, *L'Unité*, and *L'Utile*, would give the proportion of seamen to three line-of-battle ships.

The enemy is frequently on the alert when we stand near the shore; and the light squadron under Captain Trowbridge keeps the batteries in a continual blaze. Except an unlucky shot in the bowsprit of the *Bombay Castle*, (from the captain preferring measurement of distance by a quadrant to the angle, and marks taken by his skilful commodore,) not a shot has taken place. I am determined not to budge from hence, and I only want the *Dolphin*, hospital ship, to receive our worst patients, to make us very comfortable; and I will thank you to release Captain Retalick by a line, when Lady Elliot is settled. Captain Foley joined us this

morning. The Southampton conveys the cornships to Gibraltar, and Captain Macnamara\* will be proud to obey your commands.

I have the honour to be, Sir, &c.

J. JERVIS.

*To Commodore Nelson.*

Victory, off Toulon, 29th June, 1796.

Dear Sir,

The Factory [of Leghorn] will find themselves very happy under your protection, and all our fine countrywomen, pent up in Italy, will fly into your embraces. The Gorgon you may look for every hour, to receive on board the masts, spars, &c., belonging to the King, in the care of Mr. Chiese; and Captain Craven has directions to apply the transports to the service of the Factory. A sufficient tonnage to receive six thousand persons from Corsica, in case of exigency, (exclusive of those necessary to deposit wet and dry provisions for the fleet, and to bring us bullocks and water,) must be reserved. You will; of course, superintend the said \* \* \*, who is pompous, and apt to diverge a little from the line chalked out.

\* The late Rear-Admiral James Macnamara, who unfortunately killed Colonel Montgomery in a duel, in April, 1803.

The sooner you communicate with the viceroy, touching his plan for the Barcelona packets, the better. The Rose and Vaneau will serve until the Speedy and Fox are forthcoming. In truth, there should be four; and as I lay directly in their track, they may convey my despatches.

I have ordered La Sardine to cruise between Bastia and Leghorn, which, with L'Eclair, La Sincère, and Tarleton, will be sufficient for convoy of subsistence, so long as it can be obtained from Tuscany. You will perceive, by Colonel Graham's letter, that he has a distant hope of approaching the coast with General Beaulieu. We shall have time enough to arrange matters for a co-operation, when we hear of the Austrians making face.

Your's, most truly,

J. JERVIS.

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*To Consul Gregory, at Barcelona.*

Victory, July 1st, 1796.

Sir,

I desire you will communicate to all the foreign consuls at Barcelona, and along the coast of Spain, that, the moment I was informed of the violent and unjustifiable conduct of the French General, Bonaparte, on his entering

Leghorn, I sent orders to Commodore Nelson to blockade the port in the closest manner; and to seize all ships and vessels attempting to enter it after the 20th inst., and send them to Bastia, to be proceeded against in the Vice-Admiralty Court, and to suffer no vessel to depart from Leghorn.

I am, Sir, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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*To the Viceroy of Sicily.*

Victory, off Toulon, 1st July, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I am very happy to learn, by your letters of the 29th June, that the aspect is so favourable among your subjects; for, doubtless, Buonaparte has been practising upon them.

Mr. Fonnereau has gone with my despatches to Barcelona, intending to make the best of his way to England; so that I shall not have occasion to trouble you to aid me with your cypher at present. As Gibson\* will come to you the moment that he joins from Barcelona, he will be able to state his own case, and produce the

\* An invaluable officer for that class of vessels. He sunk, with all his crew, at Teneriffe, in Nelson's attack of Santa Cruz.

proofs. I enclose a copy of the clause in the last Prize Act upon the subject. Captain Calder is an excellent practical seaman; and although much flattered by your opinion of him as a legislator, he does not possess much knowledge upon the subject. Our maritime laws being taken from the French, the guide you propose is the best possible.

You are very good to send such a noble present of onions. Our honest Jacks, who are all in the highest health and spirits, send you their most grateful thanks, not forgetting my Lady, who I beg will accept my acknowledgments for the good things I have, from time to time, received at her Ladyship's hands.

I wish Mr. Udney had not deserted his post. He talked of going to England this morning, but has thought better of it, and returns to his Factory at San Fiorenzo. Should the ladies tire of Corsica, Sir Hyde Parker's cabin is prepared for them, and Captain Foley is very gallant. In the Victory, we can offer nothing but board and single beds.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

J. JERVIS.



*To Commodore Nelson.*

Victory, off Toulon, July 1st, 1796.

Dear Sir,

It must have occurred to you to leave the *Meleager* and *Blanche* in the blockade of Leghorn, while you are absent. I believe Captain Hotham will decline *La Minerve*, and Captain Cockburn shall, in that case, have her. She carries the new builder, of Ajaccio, who has promised me to fit her well. When she rejoins, if you can spare the *Meleager*, the exchange shall be made under my eye, which will prevent any discontent on either side.

The viceroy will propose to you the aiding him with men to command some guarda costas he proposes to fit out, and I leave entirely to you the decision, for I cannot spare a man from this fleet.

While the French exercise the government of Leghorn, it is a joke to suppose it a Tuscan port, and you will of course act accordingly. I heartily wish you health, increase of honour, &c.,

And I remain, dear Sir,

J. JERVIS.

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*To Consul Gregory, at Barcelona.*

Victory, off Toulon, 5th July, 1796.

Sir,

The captain of the packet your brother took his passage in complained of detention, when the whole delay did not take up more than one hour.

The Court of Spain is probably not yet informed that the French commissaries in the Genoese territories make a practice of selling\* the Austrian prisoners to the agents employed to recruit the Spanish army. A complaint will soon come in from the Court of Vienna upon this subject. One hundred and forty grenadiers, taken in one of the last actions, were discovered by Commodore Nelson on board a Genoese vessel. The Spanish agent begged the affair might be hushed up; but the commodore has my orders to represent it to the Austrian general. We pay particular attention to the subjects of Spain, and the most precise orders are given respecting a communication with vessels coming from places on the Barbary coast, where the plague has obtained.

\* This infamous transaction has been commented on and duly exposed in a subsequent letter to Thomas Jackson, Esq., dated 15th August, 1796, off Toulon. Collingwood also speaks of it in his letters, which have been already quoted; and it is likewise mentioned by Nelson in his correspondence.

May I request of you to obtain a passage to Alguasiris, Malaga, or Cadiz, in a Spanish ship of war, for Mr. Faulkner, brother to the late gallant Captain of the *Blanche*, who distinguished himself so highly at Martinique, and afterwards in taking the *Pique*, on which occasion he fell like Epaminondas.

I am, Sir, &c.,

J. JERVIS.

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*To the Hon. W. F. Wyndham.*

Victory, off Toulon, 15th July, 1796.

Sir,

I was yesterday honoured with your Excellency's letter of 27th June, enclosing copies of three papers communicated to you by the secretary of state to his serene highness the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and another relative to the terms of the treaty with the Pope, which appear most dreadfully humiliating to his holiness.

The viceroy will send advice boats occasionally to Civita Vecchia, which will open the communication with the fleet, and I will not fail to convey your despatches to England, in the most safe and expeditious way. All except those I received yesterday are well on their journey

through Spain, and I have no doubt will reach their destination soon. I expect the Penelope cutter every hour, and, as she returns to Spit-head immediately, I intend to send those in my possession by her, and you may rest assured that every means in my power shall be used to facilitate your correspondence.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

J. JERVIS.

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About this time, July, peace was concluded between the Pope and the French, or rather the former was under the necessity of submitting to any terms Buonaparte might please to dictate; and the states of the church from this period became a hostile instead of a neutral territory, increasing the demand upon the admiral for vigilance, and requiring the detaching of more vessels for the purpose of watching the coast from Civita Vecchia to Gaeta. Naples at the same time entered into an armistice with France, the French general not feeling himself as yet sufficiently strong to take possession of it.

The reader who wishes to understand the state and politics of Southern Europe in these revolutionary days must read, in connexion with each other, the lives of Nelson, Collingwood, and St. Vincent. He will then perceive

the whole scope of the dark intrigue, fraud, and cruelty, not of the French alone, but of those who were called our allies, and who were paid enormously for being so.

*To Sir William Hamilton.*

15th July, 1796.

Sir,

I am honoured with your Excellency's letter by Lord Garlies, and another, a copy of which I have sent to the viceroy. I have not been unmindful of your situation, and that of my fair countrywomen in Italy, and have had them continually in my mind's eye. A line-of-battle ship I cannot spare, my numbers being small; but a frigate has always been ready to fly to your protection. The Pope having made his peace, and Naples entered into an armistice, I am in some degree relieved from the apprehensions I felt for Lady Hamilton and you. It would be great injustice to the Cabinet of Naples not to admit that it shewed great vigour until the republican army took post in the centre of Italy.

The Austrian army has been miserably deficient in point of numbers, and the Council of Vienna seem to have wanted that energy by which alone these devils can be checked. It is

TO SIR W. HAMILTON.

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not too late yet, if the new parliament will sanction a large loan.

The requisition you make to Captain Craven, for a transport to proceed to Alexandria, has my thorough approbation, and I have the honour to be,

Your Excellency's, &c.,

J. JERVIS.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Observations on the mistakes made by Mr. Pitt in the commencement of the war — Consequences — Unanimity between Sir J. Jervis, Sir Gilbert Elliot, and Nelson — Letters to the Viceroy of Corsica — To Nelson — To the Viceroy — To Nelson — To the Viceroy — To Captain Tyler — To Sir Morton Eden — To Mr. Wyndham — Occupation of the Island of Elba — To the Viceroy — To Mr. Jackson at Turin — To Captain Bowen — To the Viceroy — To General O'Hara — To Colonel Graham — Alarm of the Court of Naples on our evacuation of Corsica — To the Viceroy — To Joseph Braame, Esq. — To General O'Hara — To Nelson — To Lieutenant-General Trigge — To the Viceroy — Evacuation of Corsica — Hostilities of the natives — The ships of war take the merchantmen in tow, and proceed to Gibraltar — Counter-orders from home to prevent the evacuation — Too late — To His Royal Highness Prince Augustus, now Duke of Sussex.

WHILE I profess to approve of Mr. Pitt's conduct generally as a statesman, I cannot conceal what have always appeared to me to have been his political errors ; to one of which I must here allude. He was much too sanguine in his hopes and expectations of preserving Toulon, with a force totally inadequate to the purpose. I have reason to believe that he placed too much reliance on the reports of smugglers, with whom his residence at Walmer

had made him acquainted ; hence his expedition to Holland in 1794. Moreover, he believed too implicitly what the princes of the house of Bourbon, and the emigrants, told him : hence his expedition to Quiberon Bay in 1795. His councils and plans, in connexion with that expedition, were completely betrayed ; and Lord St. Vincent assured me that he owed its failure to those very princes whom he sought to serve by it. The pertinacious obstinacy, too, with which he clung to the reduction of St. Domingo, in order, I conclude, to gratify the West India interests, caused the loss of Corsica, and the disasters to Admiral Christian's fleet. Such, at least, have always been my convictions, and some of the following letters will confirm my opinions in the latter particular.

On the 13th of June, the *Agamemnon* was ordered home, and Nelson was removed, with his broad pendant, into the *Captain* ; a name, by the bye, that I never could endure as applied to a ship—being one of such general application, from the greatest warrior to the most insignificant commander of a fishing-smack. In this ship Nelson was ordered by the admiral to co-operate with the Austrians, on the coast between Toulon and Genoa. In this situation he was enabled to annihilate the enemy's trade along



shore; and, had the armies of our allies been commanded by British officers, it is probable that a different turn would have been given to the war. But, when generals are open to bribery, the cause of virtue and humanity must suffer: witness the ominous phrase, "*L'armée Autrichienne me coute plus cher que celui de la France!*" \*

The French troops having entered Leghorn, and converted it, to all intents and purposes, into an enemy's port, Nelson treated it accordingly, and orders were immediately given for taking possession of the isle of Elba and the harbour of Porto Ferrajo. The island was at that time in the dominions, and under the power of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. We therefore seized upon it as his ally, to keep the French out of it, in the same manner as we afterwards took the Danish fleet at Copenhagen.

The island of Elba (now become so remarkable in history, as having been the last tiny empire of the great European tyrant) contains a noble harbour, in which ships of the line may ride with safety.

Sir John Jervis now held the whole coast of Leghorn, Genoa, and Tuscany, together with the French coast, in close and rigorous block-

\* See also Life of Nelson, p. 315.

ade. A Danish vessel, however, ventured out, laden with oil and wine, for Genoa. Nelson caught him, and might, if he had pleased, have made a prize of him; but he tells his commander-in-chief that he would not do this, but ordered the man to go back whence he came. The surly Dane replied, "I am a neutral, and you may take me; but I will not return!" Nelson, therefore, took possession of him, and intended handing him over to the tender mercies of a Corsican privateer, but was prevented by the captain, at last, begging to be permitted to return to the port from whence he came. This, it appears, was only an experiment to feel the pulse of the commodore; and had this vessel passed, the others in the port intended to have done the same. Nelson, however, put a stop to this.

*To the Viceroy of Corsica.*

Victory, off Toulon, 19th July, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I cannot express the concern I feel at the account you give me of your health; but I hope soon to be relieved from the painful anxiety occasioned thereby, both from public and private consideration.

I believe the medium of Porto Ferrajo will be the best for fuel and cattle, and it will be

much more safe and commodious to load the former there than at Port de la Galère. We begin to be in want, and the pursers are gone to San Fiorenzo for a supply.

I am very glad to learn that Major Duncan is in such forwardness with his defence; for Spain will be very jealous of our holding Porto Ferrajo, and we always perceive much ill humour in the ships of war and packets of that nation we occasionally fall in with.

I rejoice in the report of Mr. North's mission. Before I received your letter, I had been ruminating on the removal of the naval establishment from Ajaccio to Porto Ferrajo; but, if the Corsicans cling to us, it would be bad policy to adopt such a measure. Mr. Gregory left us in the Fox cutter, with a fine breeze at east, about nine o'clock last night, and, I hope, will reach Barcelona this evening.

Ignorant of the Pope's peace, I had ordered the Petrell, L'Eclair, and La Sardine, to Civita Vecchia, to receive the treasure, pictures, statues, and manuscripts, he has given to the French. I hope the Lively arrived in time to stop their proceedings.

I will employ the Comet and L'Eclair, with the Speedy and Fox, as packets, as the Tarleton will be very useful in the gulph of Bonifaccio.

Commissioner Coffin, I believe, is now carrying my peremptory orders, touching the *Temeraire*, into execution: Captains Fremantle and Hope have each a good painter, and promised me to touch her up neatly. I have written to the Dey, and I think Fremantle, under the instructions I have given him, will produce some effect on the mind of this barbarian.

The *Lowstoffe* is so much out of repair, I have ordered her to England immediately, waiting forty-eight hours at San Fiorenzo for your commands.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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Sir John Jervis, having given Nelson a sort of *carte blanche* to follow the orders and execute the wishes of Sir Gilbert Elliot, the viceroy, was not aware of the enterprize against Porto Ferrajo, in the island of Elba, until he heard of its success. On this subject, Clarke and M'Arthur make the following appropriate remarks:—

“The confidence which the commander-in-chief, the viceroy, and the commodore, uniformly possessed in each other, appears in all their operations. Their only object was honour. ‘I experience,’ says Nelson, in writing to Sir

John Jervis, 'the highest degree of pleasure which an officer is capable of feeling, the full approbation of his commander-in-chief, which must not be a little increased by knowing that his commander is such a character as Sir John Jervis, without disparagement or flattery, allowed to be one of the first in the service.'"—P. 329. It was fortunate for Britain that she had such men, and at such a period, in the Mediterranean, to support her honour and her interests. It is impossible to read the correspondence of either of these great men, without feelings of pride and exultation, that they were our countrymen. The whole tenor of their public conduct evinces one continued wish to soften the rigours of war to the unoffending, while they pursue their active and daring enemy to the very muzzles of their cannon.

*To Commodore Nelson.*

Victory, off Toulon, 31st July, 1796.

Dear Sir,

There is great wisdom and sound judgment in every line of the viceroy's letter: act up to it, and you cannot err. We have no business with Vado, or Port Especia, until the Austrians enter Piedmont. Do not let any vessel come out of Leghorn Mole, full or empty,

with impunity, unless the viceroy advised B——, upon his death-bed, would take money from Swede, Dane, or the devil.

I wish you would send Petrell to Trieste, to reinforce Miller;\* and recommend to Colonel Graham, if you have any means of communicating with him, that the Austrian flotilla shall be put under Captain Miller's orders. If you can write in cypher to Drake at Venice, to this effect, it perhaps may be more speedily carried into execution.

I have ordered two transports, wanting repair, to Genoa, for that purpose; and they may be employed, afterwards, in bringing bullocks and lemons. Two, under the like circumstances, are ordered to Naples, and, after repairing, to load with valuable articles from thence. When you write to Mr. Jackson at Turin, make my excuses for not replying to his letter, on the score of ignorance how to convey it. T—— is ordered to Ajaccio, to complete his sails, cordage, and slops, and then to follow your orders.

I have sent the proposals of Messrs. Coffarina to Heatly. I think the lemons high. I, the other day, purchased of a Dane, who loaded there, at nineteen livres the case. Go on and prosper.

J. JERVIS.

\* Commanding in the Adriatic

*To the Viceroy of Corsica.*

Victory, off Toulon, 31st July, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I am very sorry to learn, that Captain Fremantle gives a very unfavourable report of the appearance of the *Temeraire*,\* although set off to the greatest advantage by the paint and blacking-brush. Let us hope that the Dey will judge of her by intrinsic worth, and fast sailing. Captain Tyler has taken on board a French vessel, under Greek colours, some of the artificers of the foundry of Valence, on their passage to Constantinople, with valuable manuscript instructions for carrying on the work in Turkey. The prisoners are going round to Bastia, in the *Gorgon*. From a French fisherman, who regularly comes to Lord Garlies (stationed to watch *La Justia* off Bardol), with fruit and vegetables, we learn that the *Debajet* is gone to Leghorn, in hopes of finding his way on board a neutral vessel to the Levant. Have the goodness to state this to Commodore Nelson when you write.

I have directed my nephew, Captain Ricketts, coming up in *La Magicienne*, to bring money

\* A French privateer, intended as a present from the admiral to one of the Barbary princes.

for the army and navy, if any offers at Gibraltar; and Captain Ogle will have the same orders, when he has careened his ship. I have in contemplation to send another convoy to England the latter end of September, but I wish it not to be talked of. Another three-decked ship (probably the *St. George*) may be one of the ships ordered. The French fleet advances slowly. The fisherman reports, that the seamen who are to navigate them are *gens de lieu*, who are allowed to fish, and go about in coasting vessels; and he says, that four of them are commanded by noblesse. The report is, that Martin is not to command. He speaks well of the commissioners of marine, although of the department of Brest. It seems the Toulonese are still suspected by the government.

Be assured, I am, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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*To Commodore Nelson.*

Victory, off Toulon, 2d August, 1796.

Dear Sir,

It will be very necessary for you to complete your stores, water, provisions, and fuel, at Ajaccio, to effect which I have ordered Mr.



Heatly to send round a supply of provisions immediately. San Fiorenzo being now the emporium of our Italian merchants, every thing that passes there spreads like wildfire; and secrecy being the life and soul of all our enterprises here, I need not caution you to mask as much as you know of the object of your mission, to all around you, and to get away from Ajaccio with the utmost despatch. You will, I trust, acquire a considerable addition to your fame, by the service you are now about to engage in; for which, and every other happiness, you have the hearty wishes of,

My dear Sir, your's, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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The attention of the admiral was about this time called to the state of things in the Adriatic, where he was under the necessity of co-operating with the Austrians, to aid in the equipping, or rather the formation, of a flotilla. This service was confided to that active and intelligent officer, Captain Ralf Willet Miller, a man of rare talent, and most amiable manners. He was afterwards killed on board his own ship (the *Theseus*) at the siege of Acre. Eighty live shells had been placed on the quarter-deck, to be sent on shore for the batteries. A young

and thoughtless midshipman drove a nail into the fuze of one of them ; it ignited, set off all the others, set fire to the ship, blew off the greatest part of the quarter-deck bulwarks and captain's cabin, and killed or wounded almost every person on deck. The ship was only saved from destruction by the greatest exertions. I was at that time intimately acquainted with Mrs. Miller and her amiable daughters, and deeply interested in the fate of poor Miller, to whom she was greatly attached. There were few men of greater public and private worth than that lamented officer.

Captain Tyler, to whom the following letter is addressed, was afterwards Admiral Sir Charles Tyler. He commanded the *Tonnant*, of 80 guns, in the battle of Trafalgar, and bore a very distinguished part on that memorable day. His son, the present lieutenant-governor of St. Vincent, was a midshipman on board the *Spartan*, under my command, in 1810, and lost his arm by the same shot which killed the only son of Sir David William Smith, Bart., of Alnwick, Northumberland, whom I buried with military honours on the Island of Hedic, in Quiberon Bay.

At the date of the following letter, Captain Tyler, in the *Aigle*, was the senior officer in

those seas, and was stationed between Ancona and the Po, with orders, in the event of the enemy's frigates getting past him, to assemble the whole force, in order to attack them. Captain Tyler was also to protect the supplies going from Trieste to the Austrian army, and to afford them such assistance as might be in his power.

*To Captain Tyler, of His Majesty's Ship l' Aigle.*

Victory, off Toulon, 2d August, 1796.

Dear Sir,

The reason of my wishing you to avoid an interference with Captain Miller and his squadron is, that I have requested of the Emperor, through Sir Morton Eden, and others of the King's ministers at foreign courts, to give full power to him in equipping a flotilla, and carrying it into service; and if you cut him down, it may lower his credit with the Austrians, and defeat the plan he is forming. Nevertheless, should the enemy's frigates escape the vigilance of my light squadron, and get into the Adriatic, you must, of necessity, impress the whole force we have there, and give him battle. God prosper your undertaking, and be assured I have the firmest reliance on your skill, judgment, and courage, in carrying it

into execution. You will find good anchorage, and an easy depth of water, from Ancona, all along the Popish and Venetian territory.

J. JERVIS.

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*To Sir Morton Eden.*

Victory, off Toulon, 2nd August, 1796.

Sir,

I have the honour to acquaint your Excellency that I have ordered Captain Tyler, with His Majesty's ships *L'Aigle*, *Flora*, and *Boston*, to cruize in the Adriatic, between Ancona and the embouchure of the Po, for the protection of the supplies from Trieste to the Austrian army, and to co-operate in the objects of the campaign, with which I request you will acquaint his Imperial Majesty, and assure him of my profound respect, and firm determination to use every means in my power to give effect, by active and vigorous co-operation, to the measures planned by His Majesty for the farther operation of his army in Italy.

J. JERVIS.

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The situation of the admiral at the period of taking military possession of the island of Elba was one of peculiar delicacy. He would gladly

have communicated his intention to Mr. Wyndham, the British envoy at Florence, but had no safe means of doing so ; secrecy, as he justly observes in his letter upon this subject, being the soul of every undertaking, and, having no cypher, it was not possible to send the information. The plan, however, was concocted by the viceroy and commodore, and executed by them, without any communication with the admiral.

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*To the Hon. F. Wyndham.*

Victory, off Toulon, 6th August, 1796.

Sir,

I was unacquainted with the enterprise against Porto Ferrajo, until it came into our possession, having given orders to Commodore Nelson to co-operate in all respects with the Viceroy. Had the concerting of this measure rested with me, I could not, consistently with the plan I have laid down, impart to you this or any other plan of operation previous to its execution, secrecy being the life and soul of every military undertaking ; neither am I furnished with a cypher ; and as my military correspondence is chiefly confined to the Viceroy, I refer your Excellency to him for general information. With respect to your Excellency's

proposition for the departure of vessels belonging to Messrs. Porter and Huddert from Leghorn, it is out of my power to show partiality to any individuals, but particularly in the present instance, for reasons I will give you when I may have the honour of a personal interview. The plan suggested in your Excellency's letter of the 21st requires mature deliberation. I shall revolve it in my mind, and write you fully on the subject by a future conveyance.

J. JERVIS.

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The island of Elba now seemed to offer the only means of enabling the admiral to procure supplies for his fleet. Porto Ferrajo was accordingly resorted to for this purpose, and became a port of increasing importance as the period drew near for the evacuation of Corsica. The Viceroy was still sanguine in the hope that the Corsicans would remain faithful to the country they had so recently adopted; but this was evidently not the opinion either of the ministers at home, or the British admiral. They contemplated the rapid advance of the French armies into Italy, which the want of energy in the Austrians at this period enabled them to make without interruption; and were convinced that as soon as they were firmly established in

Tuscany, they would be enabled, notwithstanding the vigilance and activity of our cruizers, to send over large numbers of troops into Corsica, which, joining with the discontented and the factious, would render the island untenable by the limited force which it was in our power to apply for its defence. Still Sir John Jervis would not, by any premature demonstration, increase the suspicions already gone abroad, of the probability of its evacuation; he therefore delayed the removal of the naval stores from Ajaccio to Porto Ferrajo; a measure which necessarily occasioned much embarrassment, when it became imperative to adopt it.

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*To the Viceroy of Corsica.*

Victory, off Toulon, 6th August, 1796.

Dear Sir,

Captains Cockburn and Kilwick have this moment joined with your letters of 22nd, 25th, and 31st of July, with their enclosures, which I return, and very voluminous despatches from Mr. Wyndham. I am clearly of opinion that no attempt should be made against Leghorn, until General Wurmser gets possession of Lombardy, or that we have a moral

certainty of his so doing ; otherwise, we may be driven out of it again ; and it is an event on the cards, that these devils would rase the town and destroy the mole. At the same time it is certainly an object to keep in the mind's eye ; and the promptitude of Commodore Nelson you are always sure of.

I am not for weakening the garrisons of Porto Ferrajo, always having in contemplation treachery, stiletto, or poison. My judgment goes to suffering neither ingress nor egress from Leghorn, with a view to bring all the neutral powers on the French, and to foment the irritation within the town. I, however, willingly credit your opinion as far as light vessels go, but I never can consent to Mr. P.'s assertions. I have the worst opinion of carrying on a traffic under Mr. Wyndham's passport.

J. JERVIS.

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*To Thomas Jackson, Esq. Secretary of Legation, Turin. \**

Victory, off Toulon, 15th August, 1796.

Sir,

From a Swiss dealer in human flesh, the demand made upon me to deliver up 152 Aus-

\* Clarke and M'Arthur have also this letter : I found it in Lord St. Vincent's letter book.



trian grenadiers serving on board His Majesty's fleet under my command, is natural enough ; but that a Spaniard, who is a noble creature, should join in such a demand, I must confess astonishes me, and I can only account for it, by the Chevalier Caamano being ignorant that the persons in question were made prisoners of war, in the last affair of General Beaulieu, and are not deserters ; and that they were most basely and inhumanly sold by the French commissioners in the Western Rivera of Genoa, to the vile crimps who recruit for the foreign regiments in the service of Spain. It is high time a stop should be put to this abominable traffic, a million times more disgraceful than the African Slave Trade ; and I trust the strong remonstrances about to be made by the court of Vienna to the court of Madrid will produce the effect. In the mean time, I request you will make my acknowledgments to Mr. Wickham, for the judicious manner in which he treated the subject, in his correspondence with the Chevalier Caamano. \*

J. JERVIS.

\* See Letter to Consul Gregory, 15th of July, 1796.

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*To Captain Bowen, Terpsichore.*

Victory, off Toulon, 15th of August, 1796.

Dear Bowen,

The cargoes of all the vessels belonging to Altona, which load in the Western Rivera of Genoa, or at Savona, are doubtless good prizes, and I should have detained all we have fallen in with, but for the difficulties we labour under for the want of an Admiralty Court, and the impossibility of getting them to Gibraltar, owing to our very short complement of men. You may rely on it that no Genoese or Piedmontese ships goods on his own account, and there is every reason to believe the Dutch merchants of Leghorn and Genoa are the real shippers; add to this that the whole coast from Genoa to Nice is in the hands of the French, and there can be no doubt of the fact. I wish you to cultivate the Bey of Mascara, from whose territory the garrison of Gibraltar may be supplied in case of a siege, and France and Spain succeed in their speculation of obtaining a monopoly of the trade of Morocco. Arzou, his principal port, is the best anchorage on the coast of Africa to the westward of Tunis, and, laying nearly opposite to Carthagenæ, is quite within your beat. I have lately been very civil to a cruiser

of his, and I am confident the Rais will make a faithful report of it to the Bey. There are a few English traitors in his dominions, whose names and characters Mr. Raleigh or Mr. Vaughan will be able to furnish you with, as it is their interest to assist you in any negociation you may (by the advice of General O'Hara, whom I wish you to consult on this occasion) think advantageous to enter into with the Bey, who is in some degree subject to Algiers, and probably will not close with any proposal until he has consulted the Dey.

The French have carried on the constant trade with Arzou both in their own bottoms and neutrals. We at present stand on high ground with Tripoli, Tunis, and Algiers, and the occasion should not be lost to obtain supplies for the Rock in the hour of trial.

J. JERVIS.

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*To the Viceroy of Corsica.*

Victory, off Toulon, 22nd August, 1796.

Dear Sir,

Totally ignorant as I am of the intention of government respecting Corsica, or, indeed, of the plan of operation in Italy, farther than being ordered to co-operate, my opinion upon

the critical state of the island as it regards us is not worth sending. At the same time, that I may not appear shabby to withhold it, I am free to say, that if the Corsicans do not manfully resist the machinations of the enemy, it would be very bad policy indeed to continue in possession of the ports, longer than is absolutely necessary for our own convenience. Porto Ferrajo will be a very good transfer, equally à porté to Leghorn; and while the Austrians make any stand in Italy, I conclude it will be the policy of our cabinet to bolster them up; for should the fleet be withdrawn, the French will be masters of the Adriatic, give the law to Naples, take possession of Sicily, and, in short, bouleversé the whole system in Italy.

The despatches by the Valiant lugger will, I trust, clear up our doubts; in the meanwhile I enclose the copy of the paper which I gave in to Lord Spencer, at his request, the latter end of October, which was laid before the cabinet; but I could not obtain a sentence of reply to any one point.

I have the honour to be, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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With the exception of Sicily, how soon was the whole of this foregoing prediction verified!

Why neither the French nor the English ever thought of keeping possession of Sicily during the war, is to me matter of wonder. Jamaica should have been defended, but Admiral Christian's fleet should have gone to Sicily or Corsica.

*To Governor O'Hara.*

26th August, 1796.

My Dear Sir,

Many thanks for your advices by the Pearl, which reached on the 19th instant, and, as soon as I could put a supply of provisions and water on board of her, she proceeded to San Fiorenzo, with your letters to the Viceroy. Last night a vessel from Barcelona brought me letters from Lord Bute, to the same effect with yours, and a confident opinion that both Salano and Richery were gone to the West Indies ; the latter having received orders and signals from Solano. This seems rather a strong overt act. No movement whatever appears in Toulon, beyond what we discovered before, which was the equipping slowly the ships in the arsenal ; those in the road lying with their topsails bent only, and I believe few men on board. This, however, may very soon be remedied, as the seamen and fishermen are all in a state of requisition.

Marshall Wurmser, by not following up his

blows, has suffered Buonaparte to outwit him, and must act upon a miserable defensive during the rest of the campaign. The French are in possession of all the circles of the empire, except those covered by Prussia, and are levying contributions at will. Reports from San Fiorenzo say the Duke of Portland, and his party in administration, are averse to a regicide peace; an invasion is looked to, and we know those devils are up to every thing.

We hear nothing of the Valiant lugger; I conclude she has got into some port in Corsica, and will turn up soon. Lord Bute's advices have put my mind more at ease than it was, touching the safe arrival of the valuable supplies you and I are expecting, and which cannot be far off the Rock, as, on the 18th of July, Sir Hyde Parker expected to sail every minute with the convoys for the East and West Indies, and a powerful escort.

I have the honour to be, Sir, &c.,

J. J.

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*To Colonel Graham,\* with the Austrian Army.*

Sir,

I have sent a squadron of frigates and sloops of war into the Adriatic, commanded by

\* Afterwards Lord Lynedoch.

active, enterprising seamen and able officers, who will perform the services required, to the utmost extent of the wishes of Marshal Wurmser. I have no vessels which come under the description of flotilla, except two gun-boats, lately captured by Commodore Nelson, and they are at present employed in the blockade of Leghorn, and, when that service is over, will proceed to the Tiber. Captain Miller, who is an officer of infinite resource, will fit out a hundred at Trieste, if the emperor will put confidence in him; and, should hostilities have recommenced between the Neapolitans and the French, his Sicilian Majesty can furnish a number of the completest vessels in the Mediterranean. I beg you will assure the Marshal that, on his approach to the coast, I will pay my respects to him; and I shall have great pleasure in availing myself of that occasion to make a personal acquaintance with you, having the honour to be,

With great esteem and regard,

J. J.

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On the 17th, the commander received instructions from the Admiralty, founded upon the presumption of Rear-Admiral Mann having rejoined him; and, had this been the case, it

was his determination to have held the island of Elba for some time longer, and continued to cruize with the fleet in the vicinity of the islands. He calculated the Spanish fleet at twenty-six sail of the line, and the French, at Toulon, at twelve, or, perhaps, fifteen. He was, in consequence, under the necessity of calling in all his line of battle ships, leaving only frigates to watch Toulon.

The king of Naples, on hearing of the intended evacuation of Corsica, became greatly alarmed for the safety of his dominions in Italy, and made an earnest appeal to Sir John Jervis. This danger the admiral had long foreseen, and, in taking possession of Elba, adopted the only means in his power of giving assistance to his Majesty to the latest period; but, in doing this, he increased the distress of his fleet, which, had they proceeded at once to Gibraltar, would have been supplied with provisions, which it does not appear were furnished as liberally as might have been expected from the Neapolitan territories. This appears to have arisen more from difficulties and obstacles thrown in the way by men in office, than from any scarcity of the articles required; and the admiral made very strong remonstrances upon the subject to the British envoy at Naples.



About this time (the 26th of October) the admiral began to dismantle the two principal forts in San Fiorenzo Bay. That of Conception, to which heavy guns had been carried up with almost incredible labour by the British seamen, was first destroyed, and the guns embarked; and, on the 27th, Martello tower was demolished by explosion, a portion of the sea face remaining; this was thrown down on the following night, that ships approaching the bay might be aware of its destruction.

*To the Viceroy of Corsica.*

Victory, off Toulon, August 22nd, 1796.

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for your interesting letters of the 17th, to which I can only reply in brief, that the Speedy may not be detained. I only wait the return of La Minerve from Barcelona, to send three line of battle ships to Leghorn; for, should Solano and Richery have gone to the southward, I shall be perfectly at ease respecting any force that France and Spain united can bring against me, not doubting I shall soon be strengthened. You have drawn the exact type of Lord Bute and General O'Hara; nevertheless, they may by accounts prove true prophets; of

course, I must attend to their reveries until I have better evidence. Their constant communications with Rear-Admiral Mann have not contributed a little to his malady. He certainly should not *have quitted his position before Cadiz until he saw the combined fleet under sail*; and even then he should not have passed Gibraltar without filling his ships with provisions and water, and gaining intelligence of the route of the enemy. But, if I were to tell him so, he would die instantly.

I agree with you in every part of your reasoning respecting Leghorn. The commodore is the best fellow in the world to conduct the naval part; but his zeal does now and then (not often) outrun his discretion. If Marshal Wurmser has fairly beaten the enemy in the field, poison and stiletto will do the rest, and the attempt at Leghorn ought to be made.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir, &c.

J. J.

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It is not to be inferred, from the last allusion in the above letter, that Sir J. Jervis recommended this horrible mode of warfare, but that he knew the natives of the South of Europe would have recourse to such means, to rid themselves of the French, when there was a proba-

bility of their finding support from the Austrian army.

The following letter offers an excellent example of the promptitude and directness of purpose which this great commander displayed, on every occasion where the interests of the service or of his country were concerned, even when his own feelings and predilections might have tempted him to act in a different manner.

*To Joseph Braame, Esq.*

Victory, off Toulon, August 26th, 1796.

Sir,

It having been represented to me by the officers who went to Genoa in the *Diadem*, to purchase stock and refreshments for the fleet, that you, in your own person, caused the price of every article to be raised upon them, for the sordid emolument of some creature of your's, I lose no time in communicating this foul charge, that you may have an opportunity of vindicating yourself; feeling, as I do, myself implicated, for having recommended and obtained the consulship for you from his Grace the Duke of Leeds.

I am, Sir,

J. J.

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*To Governor O'Hara.*

Victory, off Toulon, 30th August, 1796.

My dear Sir,

Richery has gone into the Bay of Biscay, to see his crippled ships safe out of the track of the escorts of our trade, and then intends to proceed on his former mission, as the whole are gone to Brest, where they have seventeen more ; and the invasion of Ireland is probably in contemplation, or threatened, to mask some other important design.

The Portuguese will make no effort unless the British troops are sent to support them ; which I expect to see ; and my excellent friend Sir Charles Grey, if he will go, at the head of them. What do you think of the large importation at Brest from the Tagus, while we are looking for the defence of our own coast ? Captain Bowen, who is a child of my own, is selected to command the small naval force at Gibraltar, and you will find in him the most inexhaustible enterprise and skilful seamanship that can be comprised in any human character.

I have the honour to be, &amp;c.,

J. J.

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*To Francis Drake, Esq.*

17th September, 1796.

Sir,

I am honoured with your Excellency's letter of the 30th August, with two very interesting papers of intelligence inclosed.

I had long foreseen the fate of Genoa, and gave Commodore Nelson particular directions to keep his eye upon it; I also discouraged some merchants retired from Leghorn from sending a valuable cargo thither, but their spirit of adventure outran my discretion; two empty transports were also ordered to repair to Genoa, to receive the effects of our merchants.

I despatched orders to the commodore, by his Majesty's sloop L'Eclair, to temporise with the Serene Republic, until he can retire the Factory and their property. Your absence is deplored by us all; Mr. B—— being in a state of imbecility during his best days, was never fit to stand as your locum tenens.

Your commissioner gives a very exact account of the number of French ships of the line, frigates, and corvettes at Toulon, apparently ready for sea, with the exception of their sails not being all bent. We are frequently inferior to them in the number of our line-of-battle

ships, and they have between twenty and thirty corvettes and frigates, while I have not one, the whole of mine being employed in the Archipelago, Adriatic, blockade of Leghorn, covering Corsica, and convoying between Naples and Corsica. I believe Spain lays upon her oars, until she sees what effect the rash though feeble measure she has taken in the detention of our merchant ships, and those of the Portuguese, in her harbours, will produce. I have the satisfaction to assure you that there never was a squadron in higher health, order, or government, than the one I have the honour to command. I have caused every ship to be caulked at sea, and we are, for the most part, patched and painted; and when I reflect that we are in the close of our three-and-twentieth week at sea, I cannot be too thankful for the goodness of divine Providence.

The emperor must employ young and uncorrupt men in the command of his armies, or these devils will run over them every where. I fear French gold has been successfully distributed, both in his camps and councils.

I have the honour to be, Sir, &c.,

J. J.

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*To Commodore Nelson.*

Victory, off Toulon, 17th September, 1796.

Dear Sir,

Persevere in your plans, both respecting Leghorn and Genoa, first withdrawing the merchants and their property from the latter. The lieutenant of the watch on board the Captain, who suffered the boat to be run away with, deserves to be dismissed the service. I fear it is D., in whom we are all interested. The Egmont will be ten days or a fortnight at Ajaccio, getting her mainmast replaced by a repaired one. I therefore wish the Captain to follow close upon her heels, as I think it probable those devils will make some attempt on Ajaccio. It would be wise in the viceroy to take Gentile under his protection; the refugees are tired of wandering, and I really believe would prefer our protection to that of France.

Your's most truly,

J. J.

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*To Lieutenant-General Trigg.*

Victory, off Toulon, 18th September, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I believe the transports with foreign troops for Trieste must touch at Bastia, for I

have neither tonnage of transports, nor provisions, sufficient for the whole voyage. I begin to fear you will receive no direction about Corsica, but that ministers will leave the destiny of it entirely to you and the chapter of accidents. The person I conversed with about it never treated the subject seriously, and the few observations I have lately received in a letter are of the same cast. If Commodore Nelson can contrive to get the British merchants and their property from Genoa, you will probably take possession of Capraja, and destroy the batteries and remove the civil government.

Your's, most truly,

J. J.

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*To Commodore Nelson.*

(MOST SECRET.)

Victory, off Toulon, 25th September, 1796.

Sir,

Having received orders for the evacuation of Corsica, and afterwards to retreat down the Mediterranean with his Majesty's fleet under my command, I desire you will lose no time in going over to Bastia, and consulting with the viceroy upon the best means of performing this



operation, and to give every assistance in your power towards the completion of it, leaving the blockade of Leghorn under the direction of Captain Cockburn, of H.M.S. the Minerve.

I am, &c.,

J. J.

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No sooner had these indications of the approaching departure of the British forces from Corsica been shown, than the islanders manifested the most open and decided hostility. Individuals were seen in every direction, perched upon rocks, or other places of apparent security, firing with their long muskets at our people, whilst employed in removing the stores from the beach ; and one man, with peculiar audacity and firmness, took possession of a projecting point of a rock within musket-shot of the St. George, 98, and continued firing at her for a considerable time, undaunted by a fire kept upon him from the guns of several line-of-battle ships ; until having, as it is supposed, expended his ammunition, he rose, and walked deliberately away.

When the troops and stores were embarked, they were sent off to Porto Ferrajo, under a strong convoy ; and on the following day the British fleet sailed from San Fiorenzo for Gib-

raltar, each ship of the line having a merchant vessel in tow, of the valuable Smyrna fleet; and this system was persevered in notwithstanding the continued bad weather. Two of the merchant vessels were lost in consequence of getting on board the ships which towed them, accidents occasioned by sudden changes of wind and heavy squalls during the night. An officer who was in the fleet assures me that, during the whole of his experience in the Mediterranean, which was of some years, he never remembers to have witnessed such weather.

Whilst on the passage, the Cygnet cutter joined the admiral, with despatches and orders from England, to continue in possession of Corsica; but, if already evacuated, to retain possession of Elba. He was also informed by the same conveyance, that Rear-Admiral Mann, after taking the opinion of his captains in a council of war, had, notwithstanding the positive orders he acknowledged to have received to rejoin his commander-in-chief, proceeded to cruise off Cape St. Vincent, and had gone from thence to Spithead. The rear-admiral had undoubtedly strong reasons for his conduct, and, as no inquiry was instituted by the Admiralty, it is to be inferred that their lordships were satisfied with them. But I believe there were

other reasons which never transpired ; for, as we proceed, we shall see the apparent act of disobedience placed in a much stronger light. I am, however, rather anticipating than following the course of events.

*To Sir William Hamilton.*

September 25th, 1796.

Sir,

I have the honour to forward two packets from Lord Grenville to your Excellency, and to inform you that I shall lose no time in making the disposition required for the evacuation of Corsica, and the retreat of the fleet from the Mediterranean. Captain Tyler will touch at Naples for a short period, to receive the commands of Prince Augustus, and will attend to your's.

I have the honour, &c.

J. J.

*To H.R.H. Prince Augustus Frederick.*

25th September, 1796.

Sir,

Ignorant of your Royal Highness's plans, on the retreat of his Majesty's fleet under my command from the Mediterranean, I have directed

Captain Tyler, who commands a small squadron of frigates in the Adriatic, to touch at Naples for twenty-four hours, on his passage to San Fiorenzo Bay, to receive your Royal Highness, in case you should prefer returning to England by sea to remaining in Italy.

I have the honour to be,

with the greatest respect, Sir,

Your Royal Highness's, &c.,

J. J.

## CHAPTER IX.

Letters — To Captain Fremantle—To Mr. Braame—To Vice-Admiral the Hon. William Waldegrave — To the Viceroy — To the same — Difficult and embarrassing situation of the Commander-in-Chief— To Admiral Waldegrave—To Captain Towry — To Mr. Braame — To Rear-Admiral Mann—The Commander-in-Chief's uneasiness occasioned by the conduct of that officer — To Captain Trowbridge— To the Dey of Algiers — To Sir William Hamilton — To the Viceroy — To the King of the Two Sicilies—To the Viceroy—To Mr. Braame — To the Viceroy—To Captain Trowbridge—To the same—Collingwood's reflections on the critical position of the British fleet, under Sir John Jervis—Extraordinary conduct of Rear-Admiral Mann.

*To Captain Fremantle, H. M. S. Inconstant.*

(MOST SECRET.)

Victory, off Toulon, 25th Sept., 1796.

Sir,

Having received orders for the evacuation of Corsica, and the retreat of his Majesty's fleet under my command from the Mediterranean, I apprise you thereof, that you may take the necessary measures for the safety of the trade under your convoy. It is probable I shall not be able to leave Corsica before the middle of next month, by which time I hope you will join

me; but, if you do not, it will be proper after that period to proceed with the utmost precaution, and to avoid the European side of the Mediterranean, and keep mid-channel between Sardinia and the coast of Africa, avoiding Sardinia, where the enemy is paramount. In truth, there will be no security or protection from the powers on either side.

I am, Sir, &c.

J. J.

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*To Joseph Braame, Esq.*

25th September, 1796.

Sir,

I desire you will not lose a moment in demanding satisfaction of the Serene Republic of Genoa, for the outrage offered to the flag of the King, my royal master, in the fire of cannon and mortars which was opened upon his Majesty's ship, the Captain, carrying the distinguishing pendant of Commodore Nelson, from the different batteries on the mole-heads, on the 11th inst., and upon his Majesty's sloop La Sardine, on the 20th; and I also desire you will remonstrate, in the strongest terms, against the detention of the bullocks which were purchased on my account for his Majesty's service (and

not the produce of the republic of Genoa), and to represent that I not only consider this as a violation of the neutrality subsisting between his Majesty and the most Serene Republic, but a flagrant breach of hospitality, and a very ill return for the recent kindness and regard shown, by my direction, to the subjects and property of the republic, during the blockade of Leghorn. You are to require a categorical answer, and to signify to the most Serene Republic that I will not suffer, with impunity, any insult to be offered to his Majesty's flag: but that, being extremely desirous to continue the friendly intercourse which has hitherto subsisted between the two countries, I shall forbear to retaliate until I have received an answer to these demands.

I am, Sir, &c,  
J. J.

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With reference to the following letter, it is very difficult to discover what object his Majesty's government could have had in view, when they sent orders to Sir John Jervis to proceed to England, after having completed the evacuation of Corsica. The admiral, however, appears to have had a better view of the state of affairs in that part of the world than his su-

periors at home, and to have acted with even a sounder discretion than the cabinet ; as we shall find in the sequel.

The particulars of the evacuation of Bastia, as given in a letter to his Royal Highness Prince Augustus Frederick, by Nelson himself, are most amusing, and show not only the sort of people we had to deal with, but with what comparative ease they might have been kept in order. Savages are to be governed by a club or a feather. It was a saying of the late Sir Roger Curtis :—  
 “ My good Sir, there are some people whom I find require a broomstick at one time, and at another a feather.” If we had had broomsticks enough in Corsica, and Britons to wield them, there would have been no occasion for the sad scene of the 20th October, or for Nelson’s valediction to the Corsicans.

*To the Hon. Vice-Admiral Waldegrave.*

(SECRET.)

Off Toulon, 27th September, 1796.

Sir,

The viceroy has orders to evacuate Corsica ; and as soon as the embarkation is completed, I am directed to proceed to England with the fleet ; but I shall not be surprised if I receive



orders by a cutter, expected every moment, to go to Lisbon. Under these circumstances, I have thought it expedient to put the fleet to two-thirds allowance of all species, except wine or spirits. This letter is marked secret, because I do not wish the evacuation of Corsica to be generally known until the viceroy has begun to make his dispositions.

I have the honour, &c.

J. J.

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*To the Viceroy of Corsica.*

29th September, 1796.

Dear Sir,

It occurs to me, that in the situation we now stand in, the best card we can play respecting Genoa, is to let Commodore Nelson go off the Mole, and send in a flag of truce, with an offer to restore Capraja, on condition that things are placed on the ancient footing, and our merchants allowed to remove their property; and I think it is wise not to commit any further hostilities until this expedient has been tried. There will be nothing lost or hazarded by it, as this necessary conquest must be abandoned soon. Should the republic know that you are about to evacuate Corsica, it may not be amiss

to hint an intention to give Capraja to the Corsicans, to whom, I believe, it formerly belonged. The French prisoners may be sent to Leghorn, and there landed, on the French consul giving a receipt for them. The later this is done the better.

The correspondence of M. Linakowitz is very interesting. I could not help smiling at the rumour of my quarrelling with you and Admiral Mann, about the preference of Porto Ferrajo.

I have the honour, &c.

J. J.

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In the course of the month of September, the cloud which had long been hanging over the horizon in the Mediterranean, appeared ready to burst; but the admiral having made every arrangement which his prudence, wisdom, and foresight, could enable him to do, calmly waited the issue, in readiness to act as circumstances might require. He comforted himself with the conviction, that he had done all that his means enabled him to do; and that his fleet were in high spirits, and admirably prepared to carry into execution the energetic designs of their chief. He retained his station off Toulon, though frequently inferior to the number of the enemy's ships of the line in that port, from the detach-

ments he was enabled to make. On the 24th September, he received his final instructions respecting Corsica, and proceeded to make his arrangements; and, in order to husband his resources, and to provide against disappointment, he caused the whole fleet to be put upon two-thirds' allowance of all species of provisions, except wine and spirits, which could at all times be procured in the Mediterranean.

On the 2nd of October, he wrote to the viceroy the following letter:—

*To the Viceroy of Corsica.*

Victory, off Toulon, Oct. 2, 1796.

Dear Sir,

It is not in my power to exercise the smallest discretion, for they have sent me out no provisions, and I very much doubt whether I shall not be compelled to touch at Lisbon for a supply. Thus circumstanced, there is not an hour to be lost. In the seventh month of our cruize, it is a hard measure to put the people to two-thirds allowance, but I cannot help it. If you do not withdraw the cannon and ordnance stores from Bonifaccio, Ajaccio, and Calvi, there will be very little to do. Captain Macnamara will carry into execution any orders you are pleased to give him on those heads; and I shall

soon be able to furnish you with two fine, copper-bottomed transports for the most valuable stores. Gibson is gone to Naples, with letters from Lord Grenville to Sir William Hamilton, announcing this event; and I have sent orders by him, for the frigates to retire from the Adriatic, and to pick up Prince Augustus at Naples on their return. It will be, therefore, highly improper for Lady Elliot to go to Naples, unless she intends to fix there; for it will be to give the Gorgon to the enemy, to send her into the Adriatic after we are off. I trust, by the 20th or 25th inst., every thing will be ready for us to proceed. The war with Spain is certain, for I have orders to attack ships of war of that nation, in fleets or singly, wherever I meet them. How unfortunate that Commodore Nelson could not have been put in possession of this in time! I only got it last night. Your despatches, and Lady Elliot's letter to Lady Malmsbury, came in time for the Hope lugger. My opinion is, that her Ladyship should embark on board the Gorgon, but not run it to Gibraltar, or indeed anywhere until we go. The Victory is at her command, but I think she will be more at ease in the Britannia, the apartments being so much superior, and no admiral or first captain to invade them. Your letter to the

Duke of Portland is replete with sound reasoning; but it was determined to abandon Corsica, in case of a war with Spain, a year ago. I enter into all your feelings, and lament that I cannot act up to them.

Having the honour to be, &c.

J. J.

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*To the Viceroy of Corsica.*

Victory, off Toulon, 6th October, 1796.

Dear Sir,

May I again trespass upon you to send a packet to Sir William Hamilton? It is of so much importance to our existence in the articles of provisions, and the safety of our ships coming from the Adriatic and Archipelago, that a safe conveyance is absolutely necessary.

We have just spoke with two Algerine cruizers, one of them the xebique presented by the Captains Fremantle, Hope, and Hotham; and a cleverer vessel I never saw, appearing to be quite new. The Rais was so proud of her, he came close under the Victory's stern, and we had a long parley. The commodore was in a polacre of 50 guns, and was very inquisitive whether we still held Corsica, Porto Ferrajo, and Capraja; shewed the strongest tokens

of friendship, both in speech and gesture; knew all about the length of our cruize; and seemed full of admiration of the outside show of the ships (for we are all bedizened), and of the healthy appearance and cleanliness of the men.

I have sent the William and Ann, copper-bottomed transport, and the Seven Brothers, sheathed with fir, to Calvi; and Lieutenant Guion has orders to co-operate with Colonel Wemys. The Tartar, copper-bottomed, and two others, pass to-morrow, under convoy of the Dolphin, for Ajaccio. The Tartar having very commodious apartments, I have recommended her to Major-General Horneck, as a proper vessel for the accommodation of any Corsican families. She, and the William and Ann, will take in a good deal of ordnance and stores, if they are to be withdrawn. The ships of war will receive the powder from Ajaccio, and the fleet will stow all you have at Bastia and San Fiorenzo.

I have ordered the Temeraire\* to be surveyed, and valued; and Lord Proby, † and his gallant crew, to be removed into her. It may be ne-

\* A French privateer, which had been captured by one of our cruizers.

† Son of the Earl of Carysfort. He died of the yellow fever, when in command of his Majesty's ship Amelia, at Barbadoes, in 1804.

cessary for you to apprise General Horneck of this ; for he claims an exclusive right to command her services, which I have directed not to be disputed.

I have the honour, &c.

J. J.

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*To Captain Towry.*

Victory, off Toulon, 6th October, 1796.

Sir,

The experience I have had of your zeal and judgment, gives me the most perfect confidence that you will make the best possible disposition for retiring such artillery and ordnance stores as the viceroy may direct to be withdrawn from Ajaccio and Bonifaccio, with the troops, baggage, &c., naval hospital, and yard establishments. I wish as many of the Swiss corps of De Roll's to be received on board the Diadem, and sloops of war, as they can conveniently stow, it being my intention to embark the whole of them in ships of war, when they arrive at San Fiorenzo. The gun-boat will be very useful in embarking the cannon and heavy stores—the best use that can now be made of her. When all the transports, already at Ajaccio, are cleared of the spars, and other naval stores, on board them, and the victuallers of the provi-

sions (with the stores I now send), there will be a considerable tonnage; should more be wanted, you must send to San Fiorenzo for them; but you are not to regard the men being a little crowded during the short passage to that bay.

I shall be very glad to hear the *Tarleton* is got safe round to Ajaccio, her captain, officers, and men, moved into the *Temeraire*; but, if there is any risk, send the latter to Bonifaccio, and direct the transshipping to be performed there, and the *Tarleton* sent to the bottom, without the harbour's mouth. You will receive on board the *Diadem* as much gunpowder from the garrison as the magazine will stow.

I am, &c.

J. J.

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*To Joseph Braame, Esq.*

Victory, off Toulon, 7th October, 1796.

Sir,

I have read with astonishment and indignation the paper sent to you by the secretary of state of the most Serene Republic of Genoa, wherein he charges Commodore Nelson with making use of a subterfuge to justify the boarding and carrying off a French tartan, that was disembarking cannon and ordnance stores at San Pietro d'Areno. I have no doubt you re-



pelled this shameful attack on the bright honour of the commodore, which you was fully enabled to do, by the deserters being actually in your possession at Genoa, and the boat in a bay near it. In addition to this, the enemy having erected a battery, to cover and protect their depôt of military stores in the territory of the most Serene Republic, was justifiable ground for the commodore to have acted upon, exclusive of their shameful fire on a small open boat. I have always respected the flag, and shewn friendly regard to the subjects, of the Genoese government; and I am very solicitous to continue this practice, conformably to the will and pleasure of the King, my royal master, who is renowned for his good faith; but I desire you will take the earliest opportunity to make known to the most Serene Republic, that, if the representations lately made by the Viceroy of Corsica, Commodore Nelson, and myself, are not listened to and summary justice done thereon, I shall feel myself bound, by every principle which can govern an officer invested with the high command I have the honour to bear, to proceed to Genoa with the fleet, and exact it from the mouths of my cannon.

I am, Sir, &c.

J. J.

P. S. If you should find the government of Genoa disposed to accommodation, and to make atonement for the outrage offered to the British flag, you will govern yourself accordingly; for I shall feel the greatest repugnance to batter down the Mole-head, and deface the beautiful city, which has been long the great object of my admiration; and I am anxious to avoid doing injury to the innocent inhabitants, who, I believe, are as much dissatisfied with the conduct of their government as I am; but, justice must be done.

I desire you will write to Commodore Nelson, and tell him, that I have pledged my honour to the deserters from the Captain being pardoned.

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*To Rear-Admiral Mann.*

(MOST SECRET).

Victory, off Toulon, 8th October, 1796.

Sir,

From the whole Spanish naval force being now within the Mediterranean, your re-junction with me has become more essential than ever; and to effect it with the greatest safety, I advise your keeping well to the south of the islands of Majorca and Minorca, so as not to be seen from either; to make the west end of

Corsica, and to coast it along by Cape la Garbe, Ravillatte, and Calvi; or even, if you are pressed by the enemy, to run through the Bocca of Bonifaccio. I shall proceed in a few days to San Fiorenzo Bay to water, and hasten the embarkation, and hope to leave it by the 25th instant, or thereabouts, intending to keep the island close on board, and to coast the African shore down to Ceuta,—which is the best instructions I can give you, in case I sail from San Fiorenzo Bay before you arrive. In this event, I shall leave a frigate to cruize for you, due west from Cape Ravillatte, from twenty to twenty-five leagues; and you will, of course, not send the frigate off Toulon, to apprise me of your approach, as I am leaving the station, but send one, or a sloop, for that purpose, to San Fiorenzo.

I have the honour, &c.

J. J.

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Will it be believed, that after the receipt of these, and other orders equally pressing, the rear-admiral should have dared (under the sanction of that antiquated and irresponsible tribunal, a council of war), to have returned to England? I have never been able to comprehend why he was not brought to a court-martial,

by the same Admiralty which tried the undaunted Cornwallis.

*To Captain Trowbridge.*

8th October, 1796.

Sir,

Captain Bowen made out the Spanish squadron sixteen or eighteen sail of the line, and when reinforced by the Carthagena ships, they probably will amount to twenty-four sail of the line, and ten or twelve frigates; too great odds for me to encounter off Toulon, charged as I am with the evacuation of Corsica. I therefore intend to proceed to San Fiorenzo Bay to water, and hasten the embarkation, for which no preparations were made at the date of my last letters from the viceroy. As Captain Hallowell is unwell, and the *Courageux* does not sail as fast as the *Culloden*, *Zealous*, and *Bombay Castles*, send him down to me, and do you stay off Toulon; keeping one of your ships out to the southward of you in the day, and the other to the westward, giving the captains a strict charge to close in the evening, and not to be led off in chace. I have ordered the *Camelion* to go in quest of the Spanish fleet, and, in case of falling in with it, steering to the eastward, to make the best of his way back, and give you

notice, *en route*, to me. I hope all we have to remove from the island of Corsica will be afloat in a fortnight from this date, and that I shall take my departure on or before the 25th; so that, if you are in San Fiorenzo Bay by the 15th or 18th, as circumstances may happen, you will have time to do what is necessary to your ships. Keep an attentive eye on the enemy's ships in Toulon, as I conclude they will put forward the moment they learn the Spanish fleet is within the Mediterranean.

I am, your's, &c.

J. J.

The following letter to the Dey of Algiers, dated 10th October, 1796, is one of the finest specimens of the *suaviter in modo*, as well as the *fortiter in re*, which I have any where met with. These barbarians required all the temper, moderation, and firmness, which belonged to the character of our able chief, and which were here fully displayed.

*To His Highness the Dey of Algiers.*

Victory, at Sea, 10th October, 1796.

Sir,

I was honoured with your Highnesses letter of the 7th August, by the Southampton frigate, from Porto Ferrajo; for I have not been

in port during the last six months. I am very thankful to your Highness for your expressions of kindness and friendship towards the King, my royal master, and the British nation. Your determination to maintain the peace and amity which has so long subsisted between the two countries, to the mutual advantage of both, shows the wisdom and virtue of your Highness, and that you consult the true interest and happiness of your subjects.

I am not unacquainted with the attempts made to misrepresent to your Highness the conduct of the commanders of his Majesty's ships under my orders, by a number of intriguants, both French and of other nations, whose sordid views in traffic cause them to fall upon the basest means to enrich themselves; but, I observe with the greatest satisfaction, that their inventive faculties cannot elude your discerning eye, which always sees through their imposture.

The polacre sent as a present to your Highness, by the Viceroy of Corsica, was the same vessel which Mr. Bensamon, your dragoman, saw at Bastia, reputed the best sailor in the Mediterranean, and so valued by the owners, it was with great difficulty she was purchased at a high price: as your Highness, however, did

not approve her, it was very commendable in the Captains Fremantle, Hope, and Hotham, to lay at your feet the cruizer which they had captured from the enemy.

Captain Fremantle is a man of the nicest sense of honour, incapable of uttering a falsehood; and you may rely on the report he made, in the presence of your Highness, relative to the capture of the French republican frigate, *L'Unité*, which is a full answer to the impudent demand made on you by the directory.

With respect to the accidents which have happened to your Highness's cruizers, they have been occasioned by their failing to make the private signal agreed upon between your Highness and my predecessor, Admiral Hotham. You are sensible that the French pirates, manned and commanded by the subjects of your enemies, the Genoese, make a constant practice of hoisting the Algerine flag when they approach our ships; and that the *Bridget* transport, which was carried into your principal port, was actually fired upon and surprised by a paltry row-boat (which she would have otherwise sunk), by this scandalous violation of honour and good faith. The Rais, who so ably commanded your squadron on the coast of Provence, approached my flag in an officer-like

manner, by hoisting the signal when the lookout frigate made sail towards him ; and I have no doubt he has reported to your Highness the civility with which I treated him, as well as the Rais of a galley belonging to the Bey of Mascara, your Highness's vassal.

The most Serene Republic of Genoa having committed very flagrant breaches of neutrality against Great Britain, the captains of his Majesty's ships have orders to seize and detain all vessels navigating under the Genoese flag ; it is therefore not in my power to comply with your Highness's request, in granting the passports to certain merchants, subjects of Algiers, to trade under the flag of that republic.

The French have wounded themselves more than they have us, by the unheard-of violent manner they took possession of Leghorn ; for it has been held in blockade ever since, by a squadron of ships under my command, and the enemy has not drawn any resource from it, while we obtain supplies from other parts of the coast of Italy, which we used to receive from thence. I am not, however, the less sensible of your Highness's friendly offer to supply us from all your ports ; and when the season is more favourable for approaching the coasts of Africa with his Majesty's ships, I will endeavour to



avail myself of your kindness ; and I trust that, before my final departure from these seas, I shall have an opportunity of assuring your Highness in person, of the respect with which

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your Highness's, &c.,

J. J.

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*To Sir William Hamilton.*

Victory, in San Fiorenzo Bay, 10th Oct., 1796.

Sir,

I have the honour to acquaint your Excellency that, on the 28th September, Captain Bowyer, of his Majesty's sloop the *Cameleon*, who was appointed to watch the motion of the Spanish fleet at Cadiz, received intelligence from the master of a Danish dogger, that he had seen a fleet of twenty-four sail of ships of war the evening before, and had not lost sight of them more than two hours ; at six o'clock the same evening, Captain Bowyer discovered them in the N.W. quarter, Cape Spartel then bearing S. by E. six or seven leagues, and they appeared to be steering for it. He immediately proceeded to Gibraltar, to apprise the governor and senior captain of the frigates there of this event, and got into the bay at five o'clock the next morning ;

and, at half-past four in the afternoon, observed the fleet, which he made distinctly to be Spanish, steering into the Mediterranean, close along the Barbary shore. Captain Bowyer having received orders from his commanding officer to watch their motions, to endeavour to fall in with Rear-Admiral Mann, and afterwards to make the best of his way to me, kept sailing near them until the 1st instant, when two frigates were detached in chase of him, Cape de Gatt then bearing N.E. by E., seven or eight leagues, and the fleet carrying a press of sail. While pursued by the frigates, he stood over to the coast of Africa, and lost sight of the fleet; and the frigates discontinued the chase in the evening.

On the 3rd he spoke a Danish brig, the master of which informed him that he had seen Rear-Admiral Mann, on the 29th September, off Cape de Gatt, at eleven o'clock, A. M., standing to the westward, with three merchant ships in tow; so that I trust he was on the Barbary coast when the Spanish fleet ran up along their own shore, and thereby avoided them; and I have the greater confidence in this opinion, because, by the winds in Captain Bowyer's log, he would naturally cross over, the current setting to the westward on that side, while it

runs strong to the eastward on the European. At the same time, I feel a considerable degree of anxiety about him.

All the intelligence I have received from Gibraltar goes to the junction of the Cadiz and Carthagená divisions, and that they are coming up the Mediterranean. Should Naples be their object, of which you seem to have some apprehension, it will be necessary to apprize our frigates coming from the Adriatic and Archipelago, by writing to his Majesty's consul at Messina; and if your Excellency will have the goodness to employ a trusty boatman to keep off the island of Cabrita, to watch the approach of Captain Tyler and his squadron, and give him notice of this event, it may be of essential service.

As we are very short of biscuit, calavances, and, indeed, of every species of provisions, except flour, I have directed him to take in what he can at Naples; but this must be foregone, in case the Spanish fleet is destined thither, unless it can be done in a few hours; for I should be very much chagrined to have this little squadron ensnared in the Bay of Naples; for, though I have not heard of any act of hostility having been committed at sea, I shrewdly suspect they will not let slip any opportunity to lay hold of

our ships of war. I have detached the *Cameleon* in quest of the Spanish fleet, with directions to inform the cruizers I have left off Toulon of their route, and then to join me in San Fiorenzo Bay. I quitted my position before Toulon, on the evening of the 8th, when there was not the least stir amongst the ships, or any thing that manifested an intention of their going to sea.

I have the honour, &c.,

J. J.

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*To the Viceroy of Corsica.*

Victory, San Fiorenzo Bay, 12th Oct. 1796.

Dear Sir,

Your obliging letter of last evening, announcing the arrival of *La Sincère* and her charge, was very welcome. The steps you propose to take respecting the evacuation of Corsica, are, as far as I am a judge, fraught with wisdom and humanity. In point of time, taking in the fearful circumstances we are in, touching victualling for the fleet, a day is of very great importance.

Most truly your's,

J. J.

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*To the Viceroy of Corsica.*

Victory, in San Fiorenzo Bay, 13th Oct., 1796.

Dear Sir,

The Captain\* is now under weigh, and will be with you early to-morrow morning; and the weather is now so fine, I have no doubt you will soon see the Smyrna and Naples ships. Captain Stuart carries orders for the Egmont to repair to you, should the Captain and she fall in with each other, en route, which is more than probable, as I think the Egmont must have left Leghorn late last night, or early this morning.

Your transports will soon turn up, and you will be able either to convince the committee that we are acting for their benefit, or to face them in another way. Firmness, of which I know you are amply possessed, will soon steer you through this ferment. Captain Mackenzie has taken very wise precautions on this side, and he shall be reinforced from the ships, if necessary. It would not be good policy to weaken my main body too much, or I would send you another line-of-battle ship from hence.

I have the honour, &c.

J. J.

\* The stupid and unmeaning name of this ship, the "Captain," before referred to, creates confusion. She was destroyed by fire in Hamoaze, some years after, when a hulk.

*To the Viceroy.*

Victory, in San Fiorenzo Bay, 16th Oct., 1796.

Dear Sir,

You will perceive by the enclosed that we have not an hour to lose. The moment you come round with Commodore Nelson, I will proceed to Ajaccio, or rather off that port, and receive what is coming from thence. In this exigence I do not think a little provision ought to delay you at Bastia. The Pallas and Raven are this moment arrived from Gibraltar, with letters of the 6th instant. The rear-admiral fell in with the Spanish fleet, and was chased, and is supposed to have lost one transport and the merchant brig. He was taking in provisions, and caulking his ships, and will be here soon, I hope, if he does not deliberate too much.

I have the honour, &amp;c.,

J. J.

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With reference to a clause in the above letter, it appears that the admiral, by whom is meant Rear-Admiral Mann, *did* deliberate a great deal too much, and, like most people who take a long time to decide, decided wrong at last.

*To Commodore Nelson.*

Victory, San Fiorenzo Bay, 17th October, 1796.

Dear Sir,

There is no certainty in sublunary events; and the instructions I received yesterday have so many provisions founded upon wrong principles, that it is next to impossible to act up to them in the way you and I wish. The Viceroy, I fear, miscalculates his resources; for, in a conversation I had with Mr. Heatley a few minutes ago, it does not appear that the commissary has subsistence for the troops, in the articles of salt beef and pork, for a longer term than six weeks or two months. I will thank you to send the Danish brig, loaded with wet provisions from Barcelona, that we may investigate her cargo, on which depends our means.

Should the viceroy, on the receipt of my letter, determine to proceed to Porto Ferrajo with the garrison of Bastia, carry it into execution, giving positive orders to the agents of transports to hold themselves in constant readiness to embark the troops, and at a moment's notice, at Porto Ferrajo. The line-of-battle ships must all come hither. I will send the Dido to you to-morrow night. The Inconstant and Romu-

lus I intend to send off Toulon, to watch the motions of the enemy ; Pallas is cruising to the westward of Corsica, to look out for Admiral Mann ; and I will send Blanche to reinforce her, the moment this horrid business is disposed of.

The blockade of Leghorn must be continued as long as possible, and something should be left to cruise off Bastia ; for, if the French get over in numbers, we shall soon find this anchorage incommoded, and I must hold it till the outposts are all in, and even till Admiral Mann joins, if possible. Lardi has behaved so well, I agree with you his two ships should have passports to proceed on their voyage, and will thank you to give directions accordingly.

Very sincerely your's,

J. JERVIS.

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*To His Majesty the King of the Two Sicilies.*

Victory, in San Fiorenzo Bay, 19th October, 1796.

Sire,

The gracious condescension your Majesty has been pleased to show me, in deprecating, under your royal hand, the dreadful effect which the retreat of the fleet of the King, my master, from these seas, would have upon your Majesty's dominions, and upon all Italy, in the



present crisis, has prompted me to exert every nerve to give all the support in my power to the cause of religion and humanity, in which we are engaged; and I have in consequence thereof, and conformably to the instructions I have recently received, concerted with the Viceroy of Corsica, to take post in the island of Elba, and to face the enemy as long as the subsistence of the fleet and army will admit. We are greatly in want of every species of provisions, and I rely on your Majesty to supply us from your fruitful dominions, to enable me to fulfil the purity of my zeal and good intentions in support of the common cause; to this effect I entreat your Majesty to cause the necessary orders to be given, that the agents of the British army and navy may be permitted to make the requisite purchases, which will be paid for in the most ample manner.

Permit me, Sire, to express the high sense I entertain of your Majesty's goodness to me, and to assure your Majesty that I shall be proud of every occasion to give proof of the profound respect and veneration with which I have the honour to be, Sire,

Your Majesty's most grateful  
And faithful humble servant,  
JOHN JERVIS.

*To the Viceroy of Corsica.*

17th October, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I have the honour to enclose a duplicate of the Admiralty Instruction received by the *Pallas* yesterday, the original of which Sir William Hamilton put on board a Maltese *sparonare*.\* You will observe that the direction given is shackled with a number of contingencies, the whole founded upon a presumption that the detachment under the orders of Rear-Admiral Mann, and the *Queen* and *Valiant*, under those of Sir Hyde Parker, are with me; and the proviso of a due regard to the safety of the fleet committed to my charge is no trifling consideration.

I reckon that the Spanish fleet, including three sail from Carthagená, consists of twenty-six ships of the line, and a number of frigates. The French squadron at Toulon may be fairly calculated at twelve, with a possibility of three more. Nevertheless, could I depend upon the junction of Rear-Admiral Mann, I should not hesitate to embrace your proposition, of holding the island of Elba some time longer, and conti-

\* A vessel peculiar to the Mediterranean.

ning to cruise with the fleet, occasionally putting into Porto Ferrajo, had I resources adequate to the measure. I send Mr. Heatley over to Bastia, to ascertain the quantity of provisions the commissary has for the subsistence of the troops; and when we get the Danish brig, loaded with beef and pork, round, and have examined her cargo, we shall be better able to judge how much longer we can stay in this part of the Mediterranean. In the mean while, it will be advisable to hold Porto Ferrajo; and I see no inconsistency in sending the garrison of Bastia thither, having the transports in constant readiness to embark the whole, should Rear-Admiral Mann fail to join me. I cannot answer the letter I am honoured with from his Sicilian Majesty, until I am in possession of the accounts Mr. Heatley is employed to collect. With regard to Naples, as a resource to be depended on, the prospect is discouraging. The want of exertion in the executive government, the delays occasioned by forms, and the miserable poverty of the country, (as described by the agent I have employed, whose interest it is to make purchases), has discouraged them to such a degree, they would have given it up long ago, but for the active assistance and support they have received from Sir William Hamilton.

In any event, the evacuation of the island of Corsica, if it had not been at this moment begun, is absolutely necessary ; in the first place, because my instructions have not varied on this head ; in the second, that, should the fleet be compelled to go to Naples or Sicily, you would be at the mercy of those devils at Leghorn, who, malgré the unexampled vigilance of Commodore Nelson and his squadron, would get over and carry Bastia, weakly garrisoned as it is. Should you think necessary to answer Sir William Hamilton's letter immediately, the Sardine may proceed with your despatch. In this event, I will thank you to desire him to apprise the consul at Messina that all the frigates from the Adriatic should rendezvous in the Bay of Naples.

I have the honour, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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Some idea of the difficulties which Sir John Jervis had to encounter, may be gathered from the foregoing and the following letters to Commodore Nelson and the viceroy, by which it appears that the victualling of the fleet under his command depended, in a great measure, on the casualty of their having fallen in with a Danish brig laden with salt provisions.

*To the Viceroy of Corsica.*

Victory, in San Fiorenzo Bay, 19th Oct., 1796.

Dear Sir,

Upon the return of Mr. Heatley last evening, I learned that, with due economy, our victualling, I mean both for army and navy, will suffice for four months. I have therefore determined to adopt the proposition of taking post in the island of Elba, where I conclude the whole of the people, troops, and inhabitants we carry from Corsica, may be stowed. If you intend to remove any artillery or ordnance stores from Calvi, we have no time to lose; for Colonel Wemyss sent me a message by Captain Giffard\* of the Raven, that he should be ready to evacuate on the 23rd.

I have expressed the fullest confidence, in my letter to the King of the Two Sicilies, and to Sir William Hamilton, that we shall be plentifully supplied with every article of provisions from those fruitful dominions. In any event, the preservation of the fate of Italy for one little month, may have the most important consequences. The troops cannot keep the field beyond the month of November, and our continuance in these seas must produce a considerable effect, pending the negociation for peace.

\* The present Vice-Admiral John Giffard, my oldest and most esteemed friend.

Captain Trowbridge, who anchored here yesterday, looked into Toulon on Thursday last, and observed no movement whatsoever. In crossing over, he spoke with a Venetian ship, sent by the consul of that state from Algiers, to announce the Dey's declaration of war against Venice. The master reported that he saw, a few days ago, a line-of-battle ship, and twenty-two sail of merchantmen under convoy, to the south-east of the Island of Minorca, steering to the eastward; which gives me hope that the *Adamant* and victuallers, known to have made two attempts to sail from Spithead before the *Telemachus* cutter left England, will soon make their appearance.

I hold a large transport ready to sail for Calvi this evening, for the purpose of embarking artillery and ammunition, should you think proper to send the orders. There are in the citadel of St. Fiorenzo, some brass field-pieces, and an English howitzer, brought from Gibraltar, which Captain Mackenzie and I are of opinion ought to be removed, as they will be too handy for an active enemy to have possession of, during the retreat and embarkation of the garrison.

Most truly your's,

J. J.

*To the Right Hon. Sir William Hamilton.*

October 19, 1796.

Sir,

I am honoured with your Excellency's letter of the 13th October, and the viceroy of Corsica has communicated to me the several state papers addressed to him; in consequence thereof, we have determined to take post in the island of Elba, and are busily employed in removing the troops, stores, and provisions, to Porto Ferrajo, which we are determined to hold as long as our subsistence will enable us to do. Great resources may be obtained from the dominions of his Sicilian Majesty, if the forms of office can be dispensed with. I am very sensible of the exertions you have made to remove them, and I request that you will press upon the ministers of the court of Naples the necessity there is for an ample supply of every species of provisions, without which our continuance in these seas cannot be long.

I beg you will present the enclosed letter to the King, and accompany it with every assurance of zeal and loyalty on my part to fulfil the expectation his Majesty has most graciously formed of my character.

I have the honour, &c.

J. J.

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*To the Viceroy of Corsica.*

Victory, in Martello Bay, 27th Oct., 1796.

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for your information touching the Sparonare. All the benefit our enemies will derive from being in possession of my instructions is, that I shall be hanged if I do not seek and beat them.

Though the wind has been unpropitious to you and your companions, it is a pleasant circumstance that Fremantle will soon be in possession of his orders, and Admiral Mann be informed, by the probable quick passage of the Cameleon to Gibraltar, of our having taken permanent post at Porto Ferrajo, and by the route I have sent to the commissioner as a guidance to convoys, that there is really neither danger nor difficulty in running up to Elba at this season. Mr. Tate will acquaint you with all the events of Bastia. We are very quiet here, and only wait the arrival of the Diadem, Alliance, L'Eclaire, Dolphin, and a transport with the invalid seamen, to proceed to sea.

The Martello Tower was effectually demolished at eight o'clock last night. Two-thirds of the column tumbled in numerous fragments. The other third, towards the bay, shook to the



foundation. Another mine is preparing to bring it entirely down, that English ships of war approaching the gulph may be convinced no part of it is standing.

I have the honour to be, &c.

J. J.

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*To Joseph Braame, Esq.*

November 1, 1796.

Sir,

Not having heard from you since my letter of the 7th October, by a Genoese boat, which brought refreshments to the fleet off Toulon, I have only to observe, that, although I have been prevented, by the peculiar circumstances which have lately arisen, from appearing before Genoa with his Majesty's fleet under my command, I desire that you will seize the earliest moment to convey to the most Serene Republic, that the event is not the less certain, unless the most ample reparation is made for the flagrant breach of neutrality and hospitality, in prohibiting the exportation of the bullocks belonging to the crown, and intended for the use of the fleet, and for two violent and unjustifiable acts of hostility committed upon his Majesty's ship the Captain, bearing Commodore Nelson's dis-

tinguishing pendant, and another afterwards upon his Majesty's sloop the Sardine.

I am, Sir, &c.

J. J.

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*To the Viceroy of Corsica.*

Victory, at Sea, 11th Nov., 1796.

Dear Sir,

I have had no opportunity till this moment of acknowledging your letter of the 3rd inst. I agree with you that it is scarce within possibility that the Court of Naples should hesitate a moment to comply with every reasonable request we make. By the Cygnet cutter, which joined last night, I have orders to support your sovereignty of Corsica; and in case of the evacuation having taken place, to establish ourselves at Porto Ferrajo. Thus far we sail before the wind; but, alas! poor Admiral Mann has, for the present, frustrated my plan of operations, by a resolution (taken in concert with the captain under his orders) to cruize off Cape St. Vincent until the latter end of October, and then to proceed to Spithead with his whole force, in direct disobedience to the orders he acknowledges to have received from me. His reasons

are those of a man who has lost all his powers ; and I conclude the queries he put to the captains were so formed as to point their answers, which happened on a former occasion (Byng's). Thus circumstanced, it is my intention to proceed to Gibraltar with the convoy, in hopes of receiving a reinforcement. Should none appear in a reasonable time, I will make the best of my way to Porto Ferrajo, where I hope to arrive before your return from the Continent. Although I have nothing to offer against your retiring from a scene where you cannot act with the dignity and authority necessary to justify to the public and your own character a longer continuance with us, I look forward with very great anxiety indeed to the situation I may be placed in, by the loss of your able counsel and honest support.

I entertain the highest opinion of the honour and integrity of General Deburgh ; but, inexperienced as he is in business of such a complicated nature — diffident and doubtful, where prompt decision is requisite—I dread the moment of your final departure. I will, however, hope for the best ; and in truth I form great expectations from the plan of operations you have in contemplation to lodge with the General.

Vice-Admiral Thompson arrived at Gibraltar

in the Niger frigate, on the 5th, to relieve Admiral Mann, unfortunately too late to prevent the fatal step he has taken.

I have the honour, &c.

J. J.

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*To Captain Trowbridge.*

(SECRET.)

*By Sir John Jervis, K.B., Admiral of the Blue, &c.*

Whereas I have received intelligence, that a Spanish ship of the line is cruizing before Cadiz, for the protection of the trade passing in and out of that port; you are hereby required and directed to proceed thither, with his Majesty's ship under your command; and the Zealous, Captain Hood, being instructed to obey your orders, and endeavour to cut her off. In the performance of this service, you are not to hazard an action with a superior force, which may, possibly, have joined that ship from Cadiz, since Captain Bowen, of the *Terpsichore*, was off there; nor are you to cruize—the sole object of your mission being strictly confined to the making a stroke at the aforementioned Spanish ship, and joining me in Rosier Bay, with the utmost possible despatch.

For your guidance, and that of Captain

Hood, in case the easterly wind should bring down the combined fleets, and place them between you and Rosier Bay, so as to defeat your junction with me, during this short absence, you will receive therewith two sealed rendezvous, addressed to each, of the most secret and important nature.

Given, &c., Gibraltar, 1st December, 1796.

J. J.

(RENDEZVOUS).

In case your junction with me in Rosier Bay is defeated by the combined fleet being placed off Cape Spartel, or in such other position as may put that object to extreme hazard, you are to proceed to Lisbon, and use the utmost despatch in filling your water, and refitting his Majesty's ship under your command, and there wait my arrival.

J. J.

Captains { T. Trowbridge, Culloden.  
              { Samuel Hood, Zealous.

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It is worth while to observe what Collingwood thought of the position of our fleet at this period. He thus addresses Mr. Blackett:—

“ Excellent, Gibraltar, December 5, 1796.

“ Our situation is become rather critical: the forces of France and Spain are very superior to

our's; and, after the evacuation of Corsica, we were left without a port, except Porto Ferrajo, which was, of all places in the world, the most dangerous for us to be in. Few as we were, I think we could have managed them at sea well enough; but, had they ever blocked us up in Porto Ferrajo, our ruin, as it appears to me, would have been inevitable. But Sir John Jervis has excellent judgment at this game, and I never had an apprehension that he would offer them a checkmate; which such a move would have been, if they had had skill to take it.

“ For a fortnight after the island was completely in possession of the French, we waited in St. Fiorenzo Bay, with the utmost impatience, for Admiral Mann, whose junction at one time seemed absolutely necessary to our safety. We were all eyes in looking westward, from the mountain tops: but we looked in vain. The Spanish fleet, nearly double our numbers, were cruising almost in view, and our reconnoitring frigates sometimes got almost among them, while we expected them hourly to be joined by the French fleet, who had already possession of the harbour in which we lay. But no Mann appeared; and, as the enemy began to annoy us from the shore, we sailed on the 2d of Novem-

ber. We arrived here on the 1st instant; and judge of our surprize to find that Admiral Mann and his squadron had gone to England. He is well known to be as brave a man as any in the world, and no one has more anxiety to do what is right. I am confident he always means the best: but, the thing is incomprehensible, and God knows by what arguments he will justify it. The elements befriended us, for two or three gales of wind sickened the Spaniards, and we had a long passage down here, quite unmolested."

How Admiral Mann ever did account for his conduct, I never could learn; but, had the fleet under Sir John Jervis sustained a defeat by the combined forces of France and Spain, it is probable that the public mind would not have been satisfied with inquiry, or the quiet withdrawal of the rear-admiral from active service. There are few men whose judgment I should have preferred to Collingwood's on a subject of this nature—I mean as far as regards Corsica; but, even he was, perhaps, prejudiced and vexed at the hostility of the natives, who had ungratefully joined the French, their former enemies and tyrants, to turn us out of the island. And yet, Collingwood himself admits that Corsica supplied our fleet with the two indispensable

articles of wood and water, at least, which it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to have procured in any other part of the Mediterranean ; and if to this consideration we add that of the shelter afforded to our shipping, when Mahon and Malta were not at our command, a strong case is made out in favour of our retaining Corsica.



## CHAPTER X.

Kind disposition of Earl St. Vincent — Destitution of the fleet — Letter to Vice-Admiral Vandeput — Order to Captain Tyler — Desertion to America — Letter to Consul Matra — To Sir Gilbert Elliot — To Nelson — To Lieutenant-General de Burgh — To Sir William Hamilton — To Mr. Drake — To Sir Gilbert Elliot — To Captain Stewart — To Mr. Master — To the Honourable Robert Walpole — To the same — To the same — To the same — To General O'Hara — To the Honourable Robert Walpole — To the same — To the same — To Mr. Lemprière — To Lord Garlies.

HIS kind and quick consideration for the feelings of others, was a marked and pleasing trait in the personal character of Earl St. Vincent. The following letter to Vice-Admiral Vandeput was not absolutely called for by the circumstances of the case ; but it was volunteered, as a mark of courtesy and kindness, in the event that was anticipated by the commander-in-chief, of his being called upon to act on the station confided to a junior officer. Vice-Admiral Vandeput held, at the date of this letter, the separate command on the Lisbon station, with his flag in the *St. Alban's*, of 64 guns.

The subsequent order to Captain Tyler shows the multiplied difficulties attending Sir John Jervis's command at this time, and the comparative destitution of his fleet, and its need of the supplies and shelter afforded by the "miserable Corsica," which he was on the point of abandoning.

*To Vice-Admiral Vandeput.*

Victory, in Rosier Bay, 2d December, 1796.

My dear Vandeput,

Should the events of this extraordinary war occasion my being ordered to act upon your station, which I have some reason to believe will happen soon, you may rely upon my observing every delicacy and attention to you, consistent with the great object in question.

Your's, most truly,

J. J.

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*To Captain Tyler.*

*By Sir John Jervis, K.B., Admiral of the Blue, &c.*

You are hereby required and directed to make the best of your way down the Mediterranean, with his Majesty's ships under your orders; and, should you stand in need of stores

or provisions to effect it, I advise your obtaining a supply at Trieste or Fiume, his Sicilian Majesty being restricted, by his preliminary treaty of peace with France (if ratified), from furnishing either, to any of the belligerent powers; and you cannot derive the smallest resource from Porto Ferrajo, which will probably fall into the enemy's hands, the moment my orders for the immediate evacuation are carried into execution. Algiers, Arzou, or Oran, are the only anchorages where you can get refreshments, and your stay should be very short at either, as intelligence is conveyed very rapidly from them to the opposite coast of our combined enemies. You are to send a boat into Gibraltar for intelligence, if the enemy's fleet are not so stationed as to make the experiment hazardous.

In any event, learning nothing from me, you are to make the best of your way to Lisbon, endeavouring to speak with any cruizers which will be stationed along the coast of Portugal, to give information of the position of the fleet, to the ships coming from the coast of Sicily and the Adriatic.

Given, &c., 4th December, 1796.

The Zaffarina islands form the best anchorage on the coast of Africa, and water may be had in them by digging wells.

The following letter to Mr. Consul Matra, at Algiers, will show the drains by which our seamen escaped from the service, and the constant anxiety and watchfulness of the commander-in-chief, in order to bring them back to it. His efforts were, however, very far from being successful. The temptations to enter into the American service were too great to be resisted; or, shall I rather say, the inducements to remain in our's were wholly inadequate, and unworthy of a nation like Great Britain to offer.

*To Mr. Consul Matra, British Consul at Algiers.*

Victory, in Rosier Bay, 4th December, 1796.

Sir,

I take the earliest opportunity to acquaint you with my arrival at this place, and I shall, from time to time, communicate with you.

It is reported to me, that the British seamen made prisoners, and carried into Tangier, are lost to the King's service, by receipts being given for them to the French and Spanish consuls, and the men left afterwards to their own pursuits. I therefore desire you will not, in future, pass a receipt for any prisoners, unless you can secure them until the arrival of a ship of war to receive them. This is a necessary measure, not only because his Majesty's fleet

under my command is short of complement, but that the Spanish prize frigate, *La Mahonesa*, is just put into commission, and will require 200 men to send her to sea.

I am, Sir, &c.

J. J.

*To Sir Gilbert Elliot.*

Victory, in Rosier Bay, 10th December, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I return you many thanks for your interesting letter of the 5th and 6th November, with the important enclosures.

There being two captains of frigates senior to Captain Frémantle, in the eastern parts of the Mediterranean—Captain Tyler, who commands in the Adriatic, and Captain\* Curson, cruising between Sardinia and the coast of Barbary—I have given the command of the whole to Commodore Nelson, whose firmness and ability will very soon combine and fix all the parts of our force, naval and military, unless there is a greater disposition to doubt and fear—I only mean as far as relates to diffidence and want of experience—than I am aware of.

As the commodore intends to push for Naples, in hopes of catching you before your departure

\* Now Admiral the Honourable Henry Curzon.

for England, he will inform you of the extent of my new instructions, dated 7th November, and the plan I am about to pursue to form a junction with the reinforcements, which I am told will sail as soon as it can be collected. The westerly winds are so prevalent in the English channel, until the approach of Christmas, that I do not expect it to reach the Tagus before the beginning of January, about which time I shall probably be there, unless I am detained at Gibraltar longer than I look for, by the want of a Levanter to carry me through the Gut.

The evacuation of Porto Ferrajo, both in respect to period, of time and manner, I have left entirely to the judgment of Commodore Nelson, and it cannot be in better hands. The ratification or entire dissolution of the preliminary treaty between the directory and the Prince of Belmonte, must take place ere the commodore can be in forwardness to carry this part of my instructions into execution.

Your observations on \* \* \* are confirmed by a variety of incidents which have come officially to me. It is some comfort that he will very soon be removed to a distance from this command. It is matter of astonishment that, with my impatient temper, we could have kept on any reasonable terms so long.

You make me very happy by expressing a wish that our acquaintance may not end with the close of our public character in the Mediterranean; for I beg leave to assure you, that in the course of my service, I never acted with a man whose conduct, in all respects, inspired me with so much confidence, and that claimed a higher degree of respect and esteem, than your's; and I will lose no occasion to testify the regard and affection with which

I have the honour, &c.,

J. J.

The order to Nelson, to hoist his distinguishing broad pendant, is gratefully noticed by that officer in his letter to Sir John Jervis, dated Leghorn Roads, May 18th, 1796. This was at the time he was so actively employed in co-operating with the Austrians, on the coast of Genoa, and when the armies of France, under their invincible leader, Bonaparte, had overrun Italy. The Dukes of Parma and Modena had made peace with the French, both of them paying large subsidies (Life of Nelson, p. 305); and certain valuable pictures were to be transferred from their galleries to the Louvre. The Pope offered ten millions of crowns to prevent their coming to Rome, and

they required the Apollo of Belvidere into the bargain, which they obtained.

Hopes at this time were held out, that Beaulieu would have been reinforced from the Tyrol. I am concerned to observe here, that Nelson seems to have changed his opinion of Corsica. He says, "If all the states of Italy make peace, we have nothing to look to but Corsica, which, in the present state of its *inhabitants*, is not, in my opinion, an object to keep us in the Mediterranean." To this I should say, that the state of the *inhabitants*, that is, their change of mind, and their inimical feelings towards us, were entirely owing to that want of confidence inspired in them, by our want of forces to protect them against the invasions of the French. If the army which we sacrificed in St. Domingo had been sent to Corsica, that island might still have been our's, and France would have been deprived of her supplies of ship-timber and naval stores, which she drew from thence.

*Order to Commodore Nelson, to shift his broad pendant from the Captain to La Minerve, with a view to particular service.*

*By Sir J. Jervis, &c.*

You are hereby required and directed to hoist your distinguishing broad pendant on board



his Majesty's ship *La Minerve*, to take her and the *Blanche* under your command, their respective captains being instructed to obey your orders, and proceed forthwith to Porto Ferrajo. On your arrival (or falling in with them on your passage there) you will take under your command the ships and sloops named in the margin,\* whose captains are also instructed to obey you; and you are to carry into execution his Majesty's commands, relative to the disposition of the troops and stores lately removed to that garrison from the island of Corsica, a transcript of which is enclosed. You will observe, - that the British artillery, and the 1st regiment, or royal Scotch, are to be disembarked at Gibraltar, and the whole of the remaining troops, British and foreign, are to be landed at Lisbon, and you will make your arrangements accordingly. It will be advisable to put as many of the troops on board the frigates as they will conveniently stow, particularly the Royal and British artillery, as there may be more difficulty in landing them at Gibraltar, than in conveying the others to Lisbon. The *Tartar*, and *William and Ann* transports, are well adapted to carry

\* *Inconstant*, *Pallas*, *Romulus*, *Southampton*, *Dido*, *Mignonne*, *Peterel*, *Sardine*, *L'Utile*, *Speedy*, *Transfer*, *Rose* cutter, *Union*, *Vixen* gun-brig, *L'Aigle*, *Flora*, and *Boston*.

baggage and valuable stores, being roomy and fast-sailing ships. With respect to the three frigates stationed in the Adriatic, under the orders of Captain Tyler, and L'Unité, you will take them under your command, in case of falling in with them, or not, as you will think fit. The accompanying orders for Captain Tyler, with duplicate and triplicate thereof (and copy, for your information. enclosed), you will forward through Sir William Hamilton, his Majesty's minister at the court of Naples, Mr. Graves, agent at the court of Rome, or any other of his Majesty's ministers in Italy, whom you may judge most likely to give them a speedy and safe conveyance.

Having experienced the most important effects, from your enterprize and ability, on various occasions since I have had the honour to command in the Mediterranean, I leave entirely to your judgment the time and manner of carrying this critical and arduous service into execution, for which this shall be your order.

Given on board the Victory, at Gibraltar,  
10th December, 1796.

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*To the Honourable Lieutenant-General de Burgh.*

Victory, in Rosier Bay, 10th December, 1786.

Sir,

The events of this war are so fluctuating, that it is very difficult to keep pace with them.

In the present conjuncture, I have thought it necessary to send Commodore Nelson to co-operate with you, and he will communicate my movements, with the plan for carrying into execution the last orders I have received, touching the troops, &c., under your command.

I have the honour, &c.

J. J.

*To Sir William Hamilton.*

Victory, in Rosier Bay, 10th Dec., 1796.

Sir,

I return your Excellency many thanks for your letter of the 31st October, which I had the honour to receive on the 6th instant, and am very happy to learn that the resolution I came to met the approbation of his Sicilian majesty, to whom I beg you will express the high sense I am penetrated with by the gracious manner in which he has accepted my efforts to support the common cause.

I shall avail myself of the first spirit of

easterly wind, after the fleet is victualled, watered, and refitted, which we are hard at work upon, to proceed to the coast of Portugal, where I am led to expect a powerful re-inforcement. In the mean while, Commodore Nelson, than whom a more able or enterprising officer does not exist, will repair to Porto Ferrajo, and take upon him the command of the naval force there. He has in contemplation to visit Naples, when he will confer with your Excellency on the measures necessary to be taken in the crisis: the operations of the armies in Italy may be in at the time he arrives; for there is such continual fluctuations as to render it impossible to form a fixed plan to act upon.

He will, at the same time, communicate to you the orders he is under, and the extension of my command, which calls for great exertions.

Sir Gilbert Elliot communicated the very interesting papers alluded to in your letter, and I consider myself under great obligation for the justice you did to my views and honest endeavours, which my friend, General Acton, from a thorough knowledge of my character, arising out of an acquaintance of very many years standing, ought not to have doubted. The fate of your despatches by the Maltese Sparonare deprived me of the pleasure of receiving his

last letter, by which means the thread of our correspondence has been broken; and having nothing to say to him now that will not be better conveyed through you and Commodore Nelson, I do not think it fair to break in upon his time, which is fully occupied, and much better employed, in the important events awaiting the two Sicilies.

I have the honour, &c.,

J. J.

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*To Francis Drake, Esq.*

Victory, 10th December, 1796.

Sir,

I am honoured with your Excellency's letters of the 22nd and 26th October, with the very interesting enclosure respecting the state of Genoa, and a plan of operations from a gentleman whose active intelligence I have been accustomed to receive through the Viceroy. Circumstances which you are apprized of, put all these desultory enterprises totally out of the question for the present. I have forborne to carry into execution any hostile measures against the city of Genoa, in anxious expectation of your return, and of instructions from the Admiralty. I am persuaded your zeal

and ability are always well employed for the benefit of your country, wherever you happen to be; and I beg you will not entertain the most distant idea that, in expressing my desire to be assisted by your talents and experience, I had it in contemplation to hint a disapprobation of your being at Venice, whither the unforeseen reverse the Austrians met with compelled you to retreat.

I expect a powerful reinforcement the beginning of next month, when I will not fail to communicate to you my plan of future operations.

I have the honour, &c.,

J. J.

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I am not quite certain that I know the name of the person alluded to in the following letter, under the sobriquet of "Paddy Whack." It was neither Burke nor Sheridan, for both of whom Lord St. Vincent had always a high respect. Sheridan had once spoken very freely of an officer in the House of Commons, one who had recently been tried by a court-martial for irregular and unwarrantable acts, and was barely acquitted. He afterwards asked Lord St. Vincent's advice whether he should not call Sheridan to an account for what he had said of him in the House of Commons. "No, Sir," said Lord St. Vincent very warmly, "leave him

alone; if you don't, he will strip the skin off your back." This admonition was final and effectual.

*To the Right Hon. Sir Gilbert Elliot.*

Victory, in Rosier Bay, 13th Dec., 1796.

Dear Sir,

It appears by my instructions, and other communications lately received from England, that the defence of Portugal, and the prevention of the fleets of France and Spain combining in an attack on Lisbon, or an invasion of England or Ireland, with the protection of Gibraltar, are expected from me. Of course all operations that depend on my support in Italy must be suspended until I am reinforced, and see my way more clearly than I do at present.

The commodore will relate to you the dreadful weather we have experienced, and the casualties produced by it. I am thankful we have not suffered more.

I rejoice we have obtained so much from Naples before the arrival of the ratification. I have given my friend Paddy Whack a dressing for his temerity at St. Stephen's, and have inclosed the orders I have issued on the occasion to Sir William Hamilton.

Your's, my dear Sir, most truly,

J. J.

*To Captain Stuart.*

Victory, in Rosier Bay, 14th Dec., 1796.

Sir,

Notwithstanding the instructions contained in my order of the 10th instant, advising you to proceed close along the coast of Africa until you reach the length of Cape Bona, and recommending a given route afterwards, it is more than probable that the enemy, under an impression of my intending to steer the same course with the fleet in my passage to Porto Ferrajo, may station cruizers off the different headlands and projecting points of Barbary. A good look-out is essentially necessary; and an endeavour to gain intelligence by speaking with neutral vessels, when this can be done without hazard of separation from the valuable ships you are charged with the protection of; and you will vary your course accordingly. The Bocca of Bonifaccio may become the safest, as it certainly is the shortest passage; and it frequently happens that running near the ports of an enemy is the least dangerous. But the whole will depend upon the advices you may receive of the actual position of the combined fleet, or the frigates belonging to it.

I am, &amp;c.,

J. J.



The following letter is a fine compendium of sound advice and solid information, and it deserves the attention of every one likely to be employed on similar occasions.

*To Richard Masters, Esq., British Consul at Algiers.*

Victory, 15th December, 1796.

Sir,

I am favoured with your letter by the Meleagar. The conversation I wished to have had with you, before you entered upon the important and ticklish functions of your office, is comprised in two paragraphs,—namely, always to be the first (if possible) to communicate frankly any event which happens, wherein British concerns of any kind affect the interest of the Dey, or of his subjects; never to give way to him, or appear to sink under his passion and menaces, at the same time showing the outward respect due to the presence. By these means I am persuaded you will be on better terms with him than any of your predecessors.

Having fully answered all the late complaints of the Dey, in the letter his Highness acknowledged to you he had received from me, of which a copy is enclosed, I do not trouble you with further detail on the subjects of it, because the answers are complete, and we have only to

maintain the ground on which they rest. African princes always begin with grievances, which must be heard patiently, but pretended ones never submitted to.

The history of passports, both at Algiers and at most of the consulates on the African and European side of the Mediterranean, is disgraceful to the British character. You have probably heard of the suspicions entertained against Mr. V——; certain it is, that the vessel in question did take the Hero of Chester, with a cargo of currants, off Cape de Gatt, while sailing under his passport. Much caution and circumspection is therefore necessary in complying with the Dey's demands on this head, which are made at the instance of jews, who carry on almost the whole trade of Barbary.

It will be very desirable on all accounts that you should endeavour to live on terms of civil intercourse and society with consuls and merchants of other powers, even of our enemies. The consuls being for the most part merchants,\* are in perpetual intrigue against each other; nevertheless, with your superior manners and knowledge of the world, I trust you will be able to command respect from them by your dignified conduct.

\* Consuls cannot trade, at least in war time.

Commodore Nelson had not in his possession any property belonging to the Dey. The following is an extract of his letter to me, dated the 10th of August, relative to the transaction alluded to:—"I have also granted permission, at the request of Mr. North, that some goods, and the American tribute to the Dey of Algiers, be shipped on board a Venetian vessel that is to come here for them, and load under my guns. One of the Dey's principal officers has been on board the Captain, and appeared much pleased with his entertainment." This was a favour refused during the blockade, to all powers except those in strict alliance with us, and great stress should be laid on its being granted to the Dey.

I am, Sir, your's, &c.,

J. J.

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The following letter announces the arrival of the sadly reduced British squadron (for it was no longer a fleet) in the Tagus. From this moment we are to look at the exertions of Sir John Jervis, in the service of his country, in a far more expanded point of view. Nevertheless, I shall endeavour, as much as possible, to let his own letters speak and explain the course of events.

The memorandum which is appended to the following letter, seems to have been enclosed in it, with a view to Mr. Walpole's private information on the matters referred to.

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*To the Hon. Robert Walpole, British Minister  
at Lisbon.*

Victory, in the Tagus, 21st December, 1796.

Sir,

I have the honour to acquaint your Excellency with the arrival of part of his Majesty's fleet under my command, and to express an anxious hope that I shall soon be joined by the rest, when I will not lose a moment in facing the combined fleets of France and Spain, wherever they may be. I enclose a few propositions, which I trust will not be found incompatible with the laws and customs of Portugal in like cases; persuaded that you will give us your influence to obtain a compliance with them.

I have the honour, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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The British fleet having kept the sea longer than was ever before experienced in the naval history of Europe, and endured excessive fatigue, with a scanty pittance of provisions,

owing to the uncommon events of the present war,—every refreshment which can be procured is essentially necessary, to enable the people to undergo the service which the exigency of the times still requires of them. Mr. Walpole is therefore requested to solicit the court of Portugal to remove all restraints to their being amply supplied with fresh meat, onions, lemons, and vegetables of every description. He is also desired to obtain an order that all British seamen found ashore after sunset, although they should pretend to belong to merchant ships, or to be Americans, be taken up and secured, until an officer is sent from the fleet to examine them. This regulation is the more necessary, because the Americans have made a practice, from the beginning, of hostilities, to the present hour, to entice the crews of his Majesty's ships to desert, and have even given them large bounties, when not in actual want of men to navigate their vessels; and it will be much easier to the officers of his Majesty to discriminate between English seamen and Americans, than those of her Majesty the Queen of Portugal. The admiral has thought fit to issue an order to prevent irregularities being committed by the boats' crews of the fleet ashore, a copy of which he has the honour to enclose, and he will exert

every means in his power, to preserve the most cordial friendship and harmony between his Majesty's subjects under his command, and the subjects of her most faithful Majesty.

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*To the Hon. Robert Walpole.*

Victory, in the Tagus, 21st December, 1796.

Sir,

As the court of Portugal must necessarily be informed of the determination of his Majesty to furnish all the force he can, naval and military, consistently with the defence of his own dominions, to counteract the projected invasion of Portugal by France and Spain, I have the honour to acquaint your Excellency, that I detached Commodore Nelson on the 15th inst. from Gibraltar, with orders to evacuate Porto Ferrajo, in the island of Elba, and to conduct the greater part of the troops in garrison there (consisting of the 18th, 50th, and 51st British regiments, two battalions of Dillon, composed of French royalists and Germans, the Swiss regiment of De Rolle, and a small corps of French and Maltese gunners) to Lisbon; and I have the fullest confidence the commodore will perform this service with all possible expedition.

Your Excellency will see the policy of confining this communication to a small circle, for the execution depends entirely on secrecy.

A French squadron from Toulon, consisting of five sail of the line and a frigate, passed the Straits on the 10th, when I was prevented putting to sea by a very hard gale of wind blowing into Rosier Bay. I looked into Cadiz on the 17th, and not finding them there, I despatched the Comet on the following morning, with advices of their having passed to the westward, to Rear-Admiral Harvey at Barbadoes, also to Vice-Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, at Cape Nichola Mole, in the island of St. Domingo; and I enclose the most authentic intelligence I have received of them.

I have the honour, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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*To the Hon. Robert Walpole.*

Victory, 23d December, 1796.

Sir,

I am honoured with your Excellency's letter of this date, and will make my acknowledgments to you in person to-morrow morning, for your obliging attention to me, ever since the arrival of the squadron in the Tagus; and

I will avail myself of your proposal to pay my court to his royal highness the Prince of Portugal at Quelus, on Monday next. Vice-Admirals Thompson and Waldegrave, with such of the captains of the squadron as wish to be presented, will accompany me, if consistent with your etiquette, of which I am entirely ignorant. Of course I shall be guided in this, and all other ceremonies, by your superior judgment and experience.

I fear his Majesty's ship, the *Bombay Castle*, is entirely lost, owing to the want of energy in the people whose duty it was to carry into execution the orders issued by the minister of marine, and admiral of the port.

I have the honour, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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*To the Hon. Robert Walpole.*

Victory, in the Tagus, 25th December, 1796.

Sir,

His Majesty's ship *La Bonne Citoyenne* anchored here yesterday, just as I got down to the quay at Belem, in ten days from Spithead, but brought no despatches of any moment. Those which I received contained nothing more than directions to do that which I had anticipated,



and a repetition of the encouragement given by the Chevalier d'Almeyda, that at least seven or eight ships of the line, complete for sea, will be furnished by the court of Portugal, to co-operate with the fleet under my command; although, from the conversation of the minister of marine yesterday, the whole force equipping will be required to convoy the outward-bound Brazil trade, and to protect those valuable colonies; which appears a wise appropriation of it.

All our boats being employed in endeavouring to save the Bombay Castle, I will thank you to request Monsieur de Souza to give directions that her most Faithful Majesty's bounty to the squadron may be conveyed on board the respective ships composing it, to-morrow and Wednesday, in Portuguese boats, and I have the honour to enclose a form of the distribution, with a copy of the orders I have issued upon the occasion.

As I disdain the idea of making war upon individuals, and am always solicitous to soften the rigours of this dreadful scourge, I will release the Spaniards captured in La Nostra Senora del Carmen, by his Majesty's ship the Culloden, on condition that the Spanish minister will pledge his personal honour that his court will liberate the British prisoners confined in

Spain; an act of reciprocity due to the humane example practised at Gibraltar on the capture of his Catholic Majesty's ship *La Mahonesa*.

I have the honour, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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*To Governor O'Hara.*

Victory, in the Tagus, 25th December, 1796.

My dear General,

I looked into Cadiz on the 17th, the day after I left the Rock, and only found one French ship of war there, (a frigate without masts or bowsprit) reported by the patrons of the pilot boats to have lost them, the captain, and 150 men, in an action with an English frigate (probably the *Terpsichore*). There were five ships of the line, Spanish, and some frigates, lying above the town, one with her mainmast carried away, stump not removed, which the abovementioned patron said had arrived from the Mediterranean a few days before, and must have been the ship seen by the Captains Pakenham and Hood, when lying in Tangier Bay. I left Lord Garlies with the *Lively*, *Niger*, *Meleager*, and *Fortune* sloop,

to cruise between Cape St. Mary's and Cadiz, and have reinforced him with the Raven and Bonne-Citoyenne sloops.

On the 20th, Captain Trowbridge, of the Culoden, picked up a ship from Buenos Ayres for Cadiz, with about 30,000*l*. On the 21st, we arrived here; the Bombay Castle, (which had parted company on the 19th in chace) in attempting to pass the bar late the same evening, ran ashore on the South Catchups, and is all but irrecoverably lost, insomuch that I have very little hope of her.\*

La Bonne Citoyenne has brought orders, all which I have anticipated.

I find this court more intent upon avoiding giving offence to Spain, than desirous to coalesce with us.

A most beautiful and munificent present of oxen, sheep, turkeys, geese, fowls, ducks, wine, cocoa, tea, sugar, and vegetables has been presented to the squadron by the Prince of the Brazils, in the name of the Queen, and we are all to be presented at Quelus on Monday. The expected reinforcement is frittered down very low, and was in Portsmouth harbour the 10th inst. Whether it comes or not, I will not lay here a moment longer than is necessary to put

\* She was, in fact, totally lost.—Editor.

us to rights ; for you well know that inaction in the Tagus must make us all cowards.

General Stuart is expected every hour in the Argo, with very much the same staff he had in Corsica. I only know him by reputation, yet I think he will soon drive this government into active measures, or quarrel with it.

I am, my dear General, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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*To the Hon. Robert Walpole.*

Victory, in the Tagus, 9th January, 1797.

Sir,

I am honoured with your Excellency's letter of this date, enclosing one from Don Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho, conveying the resolution come to by his royal highness the Prince of the Brazils, to unite the squadron of her most Faithful Majesty to that of Great Britain, under my command ; and desiring a meeting for the purpose of concerting ulterior measures, previous to the departure of the combined squadron. It would give me great pleasure if the state of your health would permit of this meeting being held at your house, where I will be at eleven o'clock to-morrow ; but, should you find it inconvenient to be present, I will go from

thence to the house of Don Rodrigo, and you will oblige me very much by making such arrangements with him as may best suit the circumstances of your convalescence.

I have the honour, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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*To the Hon. Robert Walpole.*

Victory, in the Tagus, 11th January, 1797.

Sir,

Many thanks to your Excellency for the prompt answer to my letter of this morning, enclosing the reply of Don Rodrigo de Souza to the communication of the Admiralty despatch. In respect to the postscript thereof, I shall consider it my duty to see the Brazil convoy safe into the sea, to the southward and westward of Cape St. Vincent; but neither the defence of the kingdom of Portugal, nor the necessary attention to the garrison at Gibraltar, nor to the Spanish fleet, will permit of my proceeding so far as the island of Madeira; the return of the squadron from thence being a matter of great uncertainty in point of time.

I have the honour, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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*To the Hon. Robert Walpole.*

January 12th, 1797.

Sir,

I had ordered all the Spanish prisoners to be conveyed to England in the Gibraltar, before I had the honour of receiving your Excellency's letter, and the enclosure from M. Poshier, the last paragraph of which, I must confess, is very disgusting, and an ill return to the conduct I have observed to the Spanish prisoners which have fallen into my hands; and if it will not give you too much trouble, I should be glad of an explanation of it, before I consent to the exchange under such an apparent subterfuge. I have the honour, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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*To John Lemprière, Esq.*

Victory, off Cape St. Vincent, 6th February, 1797.

Sir,

The easterly winds have prevented my reaching this station until to-day, and I am without the smallest intelligence respecting the movements of the Spanish fleet. Its continuance at Carthagená for such a length of time is incomprehensible, unless waiting for supplies of stores and provisions.

I will thank you for all the information you are in possession of, by Lieutenant Gibson of the Fox cutter, who is directed to wait your answer.

I am, Sir, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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*To Lord Garlies.*

Victory, 10th February, 1797.

My Lord,

I have received intelligence of the Spanish fleet from Carthagená having passed the Straits, and probably put into Cadiz. You are, therefore, to join me with the squadron under your orders, off Cape St. Vincent; or, not falling in with me on that rendezvous before the 15th, you are to proceed to Lisbon.

I am, my lord,

J. JERVIS.

## CHAPTER XI.

**Importance of Minorca to England at this crisis—Disasters of the British Fleet on its way from thence to Gibraltar—The Fleet loses four sail of the line—Loss of the *Courageux*, owing to the custom of keeping Courts-Martial sitting in all weathers—The capture of the *Nemesis* and *Sardine*—Violation of Neutrality—Sir John Jervis joined in the Tagus by Sir William Parker with six sail of the line—Sails in search of the Spanish Fleet—St. George gets on shore, and is disabled—Nelson joins the Admiral—Hears of the Spanish Fleet—Falls in with them—Brings them to Action—Battle of Cape St. Vincent—Particulars—List of the contending Fleets—Observations—Letters to Governor Connell—To General O'Hara—Observations on Collingwood's Two Medals—To General De Burgh—To Captain Fremantle—To the Speaker of the House of Commons—To the Lord Chancellor—To the Lord Mayor of London—To Captain Hope—To Don Roderigo de Sousa—Order to Sir Thomas Thompson—To the Hon. Robert Walpole.**

**WHEN the unhappy peninsula, forced to cede to adverse fate, fell under the fatal power of revolutionary France, the Spaniards were compelled to shut their ports to our shipping, and to side with the republicans. It was very clear, from what passed at Toulon, in 1793, that a**



rupture with the court of Madrid was an event not to be doubted ; and this rendered the conduct of our government in respect to Minorca the more inexcusable ; inasmuch as it ought to have seen the necessity of gaining possession of that island, at almost any sacrifice. Knowing the feeble tenure under which we held Corsica, and seeing the unprotected condition of our allies in Italy, it seems wonderful that our cabinet never thought of regaining that island ; which had once been our's, and which, from its contiguity to the coast of Provence and Roussillon, from its excellent harbour, and the facilities it would afford to our fleet in obtaining supplies and repairs, would have been of incalculable value to us. In these respects, Minorca was far superior to Malta, as being nearer to the seat of war ; and with the forces at that time under the command of Lord Hood, and subsequently under Sir John Jervis, together with the land forces retreating from Corsica, it could not have held out one week against us.

The invasion of Leghorn by the French justified our seizing the island of Elba, which belonged to the Grand Duke of Tuscany ; and the same violence on the part of the enemy in the eastern boundary of Spain would have equally

justified our occupation of Minorca ; upon the same principle which directed us in taking possession of the Danish fleet in 1807, namely, to prevent its falling into the hands of the French.

The voyage of the British fleet, with the merchant ships in tow, from Corsica to Gibraltar, I have before referred to. The weather was tremendous, and serious accidents and losses occurred ; while the crews, in addition to the inclemency of the weather, suffered very severely from short allowances of provision ; all which, however, they bore with their accustomed patience and fortitude.

The fleet reached Gibraltar about the 1st of December, when the crews were immediately restored to the comforts of full allowance. Sir John Jervis, on his arrival in the bay, sent orders to Nelson to hoist his broad pendant in the *Minerve*, and to take upon him the command of all the ships left in the Mediterranean, including those in the Adriatic, and to take immediate measures for evacuating the island of Elba ; after which he was directed to rejoin the admiral with all speed.

Before Sir John Jervis left Gibraltar, fresh trials and mortifications awaited him. His fleet, which, on his arrival there, amounted to fifteen sail of the line, was, before he reached

Lisbon, reduced to eleven. The *Courageux*\* and Gibraltar had been driven to sea in the gale of the 10th December. The former was totally lost, with nearly all her crew; the latter was too much disabled to be serviceable, and she was immediately sent back to England. The *Zealous*, another line-of-battle ship, had got on shore, and was obliged to be hove down at Gibraltar; and the *Bombay Castle* was entirely lost on the *South Catchup*, in going into the *Tagus*: so that the admiral reached the last-named port about the 21st of December, with no more than eleven ships of the line, but they were in high fighting order.

The first care of Sir John Jervis, on reaching the *Tagus*, was to procure a plentiful supply of refreshments; and the Prince of Brazils, unlike the dastardly Neapolitan court, met his demands in the truest spirit of generosity. Every requisition was not only readily complied with,

\* The loss of the *Courageux* was entirely owing to the absence of her Captain, who was detained out of his ship by a court-martial, which the president, on the appearance of bad weather, should have adjourned. A question of merely individual interest should always be made to give way to the public service. In this case, the pertinacity of the president caused the loss of a ship of the line, which at that particular period was of incalculable value. This is an evil which should be guarded against in future. Officers should know that although a court-martial should not be adjourned on light or trivial occasions, yet cases may arise to render such a step indispensable.

but the prince sent off, as gratuitous donations to the admiral, captains, officers, and crews, the most munificent presents of oxen, sheep, wine, fruits, fowls, tea, sugar, chocolate, and vegetables.

It may be well here to take a hasty glance at the positions occupied by various branches of our naval force, and at the political circumstances which occasioned the arrangement in question. It has been seen that the admiral had left Nelson in the command of the Mediterranean squadron; Cockburn, in the *Minerve*, blockaded Leghorn and the coast of Genoa; and Fremantle was sent with letters of conciliation and well-timed presents to the African princes. Capt. Richard Bowen, of the *Terpsichore*, was stationed at Gibraltar, to cover the supplies of the Rock, and protect the convoys between that port and the coast of Barbary. In the mean time the armies of France had penetrated into Roussillon, and compelled the weak and timid Charles IV. of Spain to declare war against us. His soldiers fled before those of the republic; and the Spanish fleet was now to meet our's upon the ocean as enemies, either under their own colours or those of France. The Austrian armies were advancing into Italy, and for a time held the French in check; but it was not until their existence as a

nation was threatened, that they could be roused to proper exertions.

The flag of a belligerent was now rarely seen in a merchant vessel, and the Danes and Swedes began to protect the property of our enemies under the cover of neutrality. This practice being detected, numerous captures were made; and, a Court of Vice-Admiralty being established at Ajaccio, vessels of this description were speedily brought to trial, and condemned or liberated by an impartial judgment.

The capture of the *Nemesis* and *Sardine*, though not in the dominions of the Dey of Algiers, had enabled the enemy to misrepresent our policy to that court; and Sir John Jervis had great difficulty in keeping the Barbary powers on terms of amity with Great Britain. The Genoese were now so completely in the power of France, that they were compelled to submit as subjects to the Directory, or rather to General Bonaparte, who commanded the armies of the republic in Italy, and was now fast rising to that eminence to which he soon after attained. His conduct in Genoa, to the British subjects and their flag, gave the war in the Mediterranean an entirely new character.

Sir John Jervis being obliged to quit the Mediterranean with his fleet, took down with

him all the convoys he could collect, leaving Nelson to bring up the rear, and arrange every thing at Elba. This was our last place of refuge, after the final evacuation of Corsica. The British troops were speedily replaced by the French in all parts of the island.

By letters which we have seen, it would appear that his Majesty's government was long undecided as to the steps it should pursue with respect to this island, and, at the very last, sent orders to retain it, when the garrisons had been withdrawn and the fortifications demolished. Nor can it be well reconciled with the vigorous and daring administration of Mr. Pitt, that Corsica should have been abandoned; while we were contending for St. Domingo against moral and physical impossibilities.

The violation of neutrality, in so many instances, on the part of France, led to similar acts on the part of Great Britain; and the neutrality of the Barbary States was little respected after the invasion of Lombardy. The *Nemesis*, of 28 guns, which had been recently taken in the neutral port of Smyrna by three French frigates, was lying in the bay of Tunis, in company with *La Sardine* and *Le Postilion*, of 20 guns each: the *Barfleur* and *Egmont* were ordered in, and took them out. The govern-

ment remonstrated, and showed much disposition to resent the affront; but Sir John Jervis found means to pacify his Highness the Bey, and the affair passed over.

It will be readily perceived that, after the unfavourable turn affairs had taken in Italy, the management of the Barbary powers, from Tunis to Tangier, became a matter of vast importance, not only with reference to our Levant trade, but also with regard to the fortress of Gibraltar. This garrison, consisting of 5000 men, besides the inhabitants, was frequently reduced to the common rations of salt provisions, all intercourse with Spain being prohibited, and the scanty imports from Barbary being impeded by a long and rigid quarantine, in addition to the caprices of the Princes governing those States. It is true these powers never had a naval force of any real strength, their largest ships not exceeding the size of a frigate of 32 guns. But, in the event of a war, they covered the Mediterranean with swarms of row-boats and galleys, and committed great depredations, being seldom restrained by any scruples about neutrality, or international law.

We now approach a great and important event in the life of Sir John Jervis. The admiral sailed from Lisbon early in February,

with the Victory, Barfleur, Britannia, Goliath, Excellent, Egmont, Blenheim, Diadem, and St. George, but in passing Fort St. Julian the latter ship unfortunately grounded, and was nearly lost. Although this reduced his squadron to only eight sail, the undaunted chief went in search of his enemy. On the 6th he was joined by Rear-Admiral Sir William Parker, with six ships, and on the following day by the Culloden, thus making fifteen sail of the line. With these he proceeded, without loss of time, off Cape St. Vincent, which he reached shortly after.

In the mean while, Lord Garlies, in the Lively, 32 guns, had been left with a squadron of frigates under his orders, for the purpose of blockading Cadiz and the neighbouring ports. Commodore Nelson, in coming down from Elba, had a narrow escape from capture by the Spanish fleet;\* and on his arrival off Gibraltar, he was again chased by two Spanish line-of-battle ships, but reached the bay in safety. He joined the admiral at ten o'clock on the night of the 13th; and, having again stumbled upon the Spanish fleet, he corroborated the account of its near approach. As soon as he joined the fleet, Nelson hoisted his broad pendant on board the Captain of 74 guns.

\* See Naval History, for an account of what we refer to.



On the same day, Captain Foote, of the *Niger*, informed Sir John Jervis that he had been for some days in company with the Spanish fleet; and in the night their signal-guns were heard by our fleet, and the admiral made the signal to prepare for battle.

At the dawn of day, on the 14th of February, 1797, the British fleet was on the starboard tack, standing to the southward, the wind west by south, Cape St. Vincent bearing east by north, distant eight leagues, the weather hazy, when the Spanish fleet was discovered extending from south-west to south. At forty-nine minutes past ten, it was ascertained by the *Bonne Citoyenne*, sloop of war, that the enemy had 27 ships of the line; and Sir John Jervis soon after communicated to the fleet his intention of cutting through them. Trowbridge, in the *Culloden*, was ordered to lead the van. The British fleet was formed in line of battle on the starboard tack, consequently standing to the southward—the Spanish fleet crossing them on the larboard tack, standing to the north-west; and the distance between the fleets was about two miles. Between the eighteenth and nineteenth ships of the Spanish fleet there was a considerable interval, and through this gap, Trowbridge, in the *Culloden*, led the British

fleet, opening a well-directed fire on both sides, and effectually cutting off nine sail of the enemy's line, or the rear division. As soon as he had got through the line, Trowbridge tacked again, and continued to engage the weather or centre division of the enemy. He was followed by the *Blenheim*, *Prince George*, *Orion*, and *Irresistible*. The *Colossus*, having lost her foreyard, was prevented from following, as her gallant captain wished and intended to have done.

Nelson, who, as we have seen, had hoisted his broad pendant in the *Captain*, was in the rear of the line. He observed the van of the enemy keeping off the wind, with the evident design of forming a junction with the separated ships; he therefore wore, and made all sail, to assist the *Culloden*, at that time closely engaged. His example was followed by *Collingwood*, in the *Excellent*. These, with the British ships before named, turned the Spaniards, who again hauled to the wind, on the larboard tack.

The *Principe de Asturias*, of 112 guns, one of the rear division, which had been cut off, and bearing the flag of a vice-admiral, made an effort to break through the British line, and to cross ahead of the *Victory*. This bold and creditable act was frustrated by the *Victory* throwing in stays. The Spaniard did the same; and, as she turned her quarter to the *Victory*,

while paying off, she received the whole well-directed broadside of that celebrated ship, at the distance of not more than two cables' length. The unlucky, but gallant Spaniard, finding his berth too warm, hastened to regain his station among his own fleet, having suffered rather severely by his enterprize.

Our van ships, as well as the Captain and the Excellent, from the rear, greatly distinguished themselves. The Salvador del Mundo, and the San Isidro, struck their colours, and were taken possession of. The San Josef and San Nicholas, having fallen on board of each other, were found in that position by Nelson, in the Captain, who, passing under their lee, with his fore-topmast hanging over the side, put his helm down, and his ship, having no head-sail, quickly flew up in the wind, and fell, as her gallant commander intended, on board of the San Nicholas. Nelson rushed in, sword in hand, followed by his officers and boarders, and having carried her, proceeded to the San Josef, which he took in the same gallant manner. The Spanish officers must not be denied the credit of having defended their ships well, but their men forsook them.

In the mean time, Sir John Jervis, in the Victory, followed by the Barfleur, Vice-Admiral the Honourable William Waldegrave, passed close under the stern of the Salvador del Mundo

(which, although previously silenced by the Orion, still kept her colours flying), and gave her one or two broadsides, when she surrendered, and was secured.

The Santissima Trinidad had been also completely silenced, and it is wonderful that she was not taken possession of. She, however, was most unaccountably suffered to escape. About half-past four P.M., the British admiral observing that nine sail of the enemy's line, which had been separated in the morning, were coming down to reinforce the ships which had borne the brunt of the action, made the signal to discontinue, and form the line, so as to cover the prizes, as well as our own disabled ships, the Culoden, the Captain, and the Colossus. The Spaniards again united, but were reduced to twenty-three sail of the line; and they stood away on the starboard tack, and the action ceased.

The admiral, in his letter, makes no particular mention of any officer except Captain Calder, his first captain. In this he, no doubt, sought to avoid those jealousies, injurious to the service, which had been produced by other letters, under similar circumstances. Yet, on this occasion, none will dispute the claims of Collingwood, Trowbridge, Murray, Parker, Nelson, Frederick, De Saumarez, and Martin.

The latter is the only officer among the above-named who remains alive. A medal was struck, by his Majesty's order, to commemorate the victory, and presented to each admiral and captain, without distinction. When offered to Collingwood, he refused it, until he should receive one for the 1st of June, in which action, he declared, he had equally done his duty. It was, accordingly, sent to him, with an apology for its having been delayed.\*

• “When Lord St. Vincent informed Collingwood that he was to receive one of the medals which were to be distributed on this occasion, he told the admiral, with great feeling and firmness, that he could not consent to receive a medal, while that for the 1st of June was withheld. ‘I feel,’ said he, ‘that I was then improperly passed over; and to receive such a distinction now, would be to acknowledge the propriety of that injustice.’ ‘That is precisely the answer I expected from you, Captain Collingwood,’ was Lord St. Vincent’s reply.

“The *two* medals were afterwards, and, as Captain Collingwood seems to have thought, by desire of the King, transmitted to him, at the same time, by Lord Spencer, the then first lord of the Admiralty, with a civil apology for the former omission. ‘I congratulate you most sincerely,’ said his lordship, ‘on having had the good fortune to bear so conspicuous a part on two such glorious occasions, and have troubled you with this letter only to say, that the former medal would have been transmitted to you some months ago, *if a proper conveyance could have been found for it.*’”—Memoirs of Lord Collingwood, p. 46.

Why that virtuous and upright minister should have sought refuge under this seeming evasion, to cover the sins of another (for he was not first lord of the Admiralty when the battle of the 1st of June was fought), I own I am at a loss to discover. The fact seems to have been, that there was a want of fair and straightforward dealing on all sides. Situated as Collingwood and other captains on the 1st of June were, their course was a clear one. They had a right to demand a court-martial to be held upon them, for the implied censure of their

The thanks of both Houses of Parliament were voted to the fleet; the commander-in-chief was created a peer, by the title of Earl St. Vincent; Vice-Admirals Thompson and Parker, and Captain Calder, were created baronets; and Nelson was honoured with the order of the Bath. After the battle, Sir John Jervis received Nelson on the quarter-deck of the Victory, took him in his arms, said he could not sufficiently thank him, and insisted on his keeping the sword of the Spanish rear-admiral, which he had so bravely won.

If we estimate the merits of this action only by the numerical loss of the enemy, we shall form a very inadequate notion of its importance. The French, from this period, no longer relied on the assistance of Spain; jealousy was sown between them; and the Spaniards became

conduct in the distribution of the medals; and the Admiralty, in justice to the naval department, had no right to keep officers in employment, whom they supposed to have been neglectful of their duties in the day of battle, especially when it was notorious that there were many able men, both on full and half-pay, ready to supply their places. If then a court-martial was not demanded by the aggrieved parties, they had no right to complain; if it was demanded, it must have been refused, and, consequently, the aggrieved parties were virtually acquitted; and the withholding from them the same rewards as were given to others was an act of cruel injustice. Collingwood was the only man among them who, by a fortunate position, was able to demand and obtain redress. The claims of officers in and after the day of battle are so numerous and so complicated, that, as I have shown in the Naval History, on the 1st of June, so likewise I may say of the 14th of February, it is impossible to reconcile them all.

the friends of Britain, and the secret enemies of the French republic. This battle may be said to have paralyzed the power of Spain, and to have reduced its marine to a mere nonentity.

The public letter of Sir John Jervis has been severely criticised for its brevity ; as if it were required of an admiral to extol the feats of himself, and his companions in arms. He has often told me, that he hated pompous verbosity. He sought to tell his story in few words, and to leave his deeds to speak for themselves. His lordship's letter contains a distinct and concise narrative of the facts, the particulars being ever supplied by supplementary information. If the reader will turn to Nelson's account of the battle of the Nile, he will find the whole description of that stupendous event contained in the first seven lines of his letter. The rest is all eulogium.

The following is the official account of the great victory of Cape St. Vincent, from the London Gazette Extraordinary :—

Admiralty Office, March 3, 1797.

Robert Calder, Esq., first captain to Admiral Sir John Jervis, K.B., arrived this morning, with despatches from him to Mr. Nepean, of which the following are copies :—

Victory, Lagos Bay, February 16, 1797.

Sir,

The hopes of falling in with the Spanish fleet, expressed in my letter to you of the 13th instant, were confirmed last night, by our distinctly hearing the report of their signal guns, and by intelligence received from Captain Foote, of his Majesty's ship the Niger, who had, with equal judgment and perseverance, kept company with them for several days, on my prescribed rendezvous (which, from the strong south-east winds, I had never been able to reach), and that they were not more than the distance of three or four leagues from us. I anxiously awaited the dawn of day, when, being on the starboard tack, Cape St. Vincent bearing east by north eight leagues, I had the satisfaction of seeing a number of ships extending from south-west to south, the wind then at west by south. At forty-nine minutes past ten, the weather being extremely hazy, La Bonne Citoyenne made the signal that the ships seen were of the line, twenty-seven in number. His Majesty's squadron under my command, consisting of fifteen ships of the line, named in the margin,\*

•Victory . . . 100	Namur . . . 90	Colossus . . . 74
Britannia . . 100	Captain . . . 74	Egmont . . . 74
Barfleur . . . 98	Goliath . . . 74	Culloden . . . 74
Prince George 98	Excellent . . 74	Irresistible . 74
Blenheim . . . 90	Orion . . . . 74	Diadem . . . 64



happily formed in the most compact order of sailing, in two lines. By carrying a press of sail, I was fortunate in getting in with the enemy's fleet at half-past eleven o'clock, before it had time to connect and form a regular order of battle. Such a moment was not to be lost; and, confident in the skill, valour, and discipline of the officers and men I had the happiness to command, and judging that the honour of his Majesty's arms, and the circumstances of the war in these seas, required a considerable degree of enterprize, I felt myself justified in departing from the regular system; and, passing through their fleet, in a line formed with the utmost celerity, tacked, and thereby separated one-third from the main body, after a partial cannonade, which prevented their rejunction till the evening; and, by the very great exertions of the ships which had the good fortune to arrive up with the enemy on the larboard tack, the ships named in the margin\* were captured, and the action ceased about five o'clock in the evening.

I enclose the most correct list I have been able to obtain of the Spanish fleet opposed to me, amounting to twenty-seven sail of the line,

•Salvador del Mundo . . . . .	112	San Nicolas . . . . .	80
San Josef . . . . .	112	San Ysidro . . . . .	74

and an account of the killed and wounded in his Majesty's ships, as well as in those taken from the enemy. The moment the latter (almost totally dismasted), and his Majesty's ships, the Captain and Culloden, are in a state to put to sea, I shall avail myself of the first favourable wind to proceed off Cape St. Vincent, in my way to Lisbon.

Captain Calder, whose able assistance has greatly contributed to the public service during my command, is the bearer of this, and will more particularly describe to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the movements of the squadron on the 14th, and the present state of it.

I am, Sir, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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LIST OF THE SPANISH FLEET OPPOSED TO THE BRITISH, THE 14TH  
FEBRUARY, 1797.

						Killed.		Wounded.
Santissima Trinidad	.	.	.	130	.	.	.	0
Mexicana	.	.	.	112	.	.	.	0
Principe de Asturias	.	.	.	112	.	.	.	0
Conception	.	.	.	112	.	.	.	0
Conde de Regla	.	.	.	112	.	.	.	0
Salvador del Mundo	.	.	.	112 (taken)	.	.	.	42
San Josef	.	.	.	112 (taken)	.	.	.	46
San Nicolas	.	.	.	84 (taken)	.	.	.	144
Oriente	.	.	.	74	.	.	.	0
Glorioso	.	.	.	74	.	.	.	0
Atalante	.	.	.	74	.	.	.	0

		Killed.	Wounded.
Conquistador . . . . .	74	0	0
Soberano . . . . .	74	0	0
Firme . . . . .	74	0	0
Pelayo . . . . .	74	0	0
San Genaro . . . . .	74	0	0
San Juan Nepomuceno . . .	74	0	0
San Francisco de Paula . .	74	0	0
San Ysidro . . . . .	74 (taken)	29	63
San Antonio . . . . .	74	0	0
San Pablo . . . . .	74	0	0
San Firmin . . . . .	74	0	0
Neptuno . . . . .	74	0	0
Bahama . . . . .	74	0	0
San Domingo . . . . .	74	0	0
Terrible . . . . .	74	0	0
Il Defenso . . . . .	74	0	0

N.B. Among the killed is General Don Francisco Xavier Winthuysen, chef d'escadre.

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LIST OF THE BRITISH FLEET OPPOSED TO THE SPANISH, THE 14TH  
FEBRUARY, 1797.

		Killed.	Wounded.
	Admiral Sir John Jervis, K.B.		
Victory . . . 100	1st Capt., Robert Calder . . . .	1	5
	2d Capt., George Grey		
Britannia . . . 100	Vice-Admiral Thompson	0	1
	Capt. T. Foley		
Barfleur . . . 98	Vice-Adm. Hon. W. Waldegrave	0	7
	Capt. James Richard Dacres		
Prince George 98	Rear-Admiral William Parker	8	7
	Capt. John Irvin		
Blenheim . . . 90	— Thomas Lenox Frederick . . .	12	49
Namur . . . . 90	— J. H. Whitshed . . . . .	2	5
Captain . . . . 74	Commodore Nelson	24	56
	Capt. R. W. Miller		
Goliath . . . . 74	— Sir C. H. Knowles . . . . .	0	8
Excellent . . . 74	— C. Collingwood . . . . .	11	12

				Killed.	Wounded.
Orion . . .	74	Capt. Sir James Saumarez . . .	0	9	
Colossus . .	74	— George Murray . . . . .	0	5	
Egmont . .	74	— John Sutton . . . . .	0	0	
Culloden . .	74	— Thomas Trowbridge . . . .	10	47	
Irresistible .	74	— George Martin . . . . .	5	14	
Diadem . .	64	— G. H. Towry . . . . .	0	2	
			—	—	
			73	227	

Don Joseph de Cordova, the Spanish commander-in-chief in this action, was broke, and rendered incapable of holding any office under the government, forbidden to appear at court, or in any of the chief towns on the coast. Morales was also broke, with many other captains, and a long list of inferior officers.

Thus was a glorious reward achieved for all the labours, cares, and anxieties of our truly great and patriotic chief, amply repaying him for the fatigue of body and mind which he had suffered during the fourteen months he had held the command. This victory was the fruit of a wise and well-calculated combination of measures, and a determined energy of character. No danger, no superior numbers, no difficulties, could drive him from his fixed purpose. Never discouraged by disasters, he looked forward to success as the certain result of patience and perseverance.

When the action was over, the British fleet proceeded with the prizes to Lagos Bay. In

their way thither, the Spanish admiral formed his line, and stood after them, as if intending to renew the action; but, on Sir John Jervis making the signal, and preparing for battle, they stood away, and he saw no more of them.

However the learned biographer of Mr. Pitt might affect to undervalue this great victory of Sir John Jervis, over a fleet so superior in point of ships, guns, and men, I must claim a high place in British naval annals, for the officer who was the first that dared to venture on the attack of an enemy's fleet with such a disproportionate force. That alone was an act of magnanimity which should, at least, have secured to him the unqualified approbation of every real friend of his country. In fact, it did so; and even the most prejudiced party spirit was subdued by the general voice of applause which resounded through the empire. Mr. Pitt was one of the first to feel the good effects of this battle. Ireland was secured from the attacks of a combined fleet; and the government was enabled to reinforce Admiral Duncan in the North Seas, and thereby insure the victory of Camperdown, which took place in the month of October following. It also gave encouragement to our German allies, and spirits to the people at home; it made the war popular, and pro-

duced a cheerful compliance with the measures of the government.

The Emperor of Germany was encouraged, soon after this event, to renew the contest with France; and, indeed, the victory of Valentine's day gave a new life to the war, and added fresh vigour to the efforts of both the government and the people in prosecuting it.

In this action, Sir Gilbert Elliot, afterwards Lord Minto, was present, being at the time a passenger on board the *Lively* frigate, with Captain Lord Garlies. Colonel Drinkwater, who wrote an account of the action, was also on board the *Lively*.

The following letter is dated four days after the action of Cape St. Vincent.

On the 16th February, the admiral anchored in Lagos Bay, where the Spanish fleet made some movement as if to attack him. The following letter will show his scrupulous attention to the law of nations, with respect to neutral ports; his lordship well knew he had nothing to fear from the hostility of the Spanish fleet.

*To His Excellency Governor Connell, Lagos.*

Victory, in Lagos Bay, 18th Feb., 1797.

Sir,

From the movements of the fleet of Spain in the offing, there are indications of an

intention to attack His Britannic Majesty's squadron under my command in their present anchorage ; and I do not lose a moment to acquaint you, I shall resist such an attempt in its first dawn, that you may take such measures as you may judge proper, to prevent any the smallest violations of the neutrality of the dominions of her most faithful majesty.

I have the honour, &c.,

— J. J.

Soon after the fleet had partially repaired the damage sustained in the action, the admiral quitted Lagos Bay ; and, seeing his old antagonists, the Spanish fleet, were snugly moored in Cadiz, he proceeded, with his prizes, to the Tagus, where he arrived in safety on the 25th of February.

We now again recur to the admiral's own letters, in illustration of the progress of his career.

*To the Hon. Lieut.-Gen. De Burgh.*

Victory, in the Tagus, 14th March, 1797.

Sir,

The last reports from Toulon state the enemy's fleet to be laid up for want of provision and stores ; but, having been so often deceived on this head, I place no reliance on the report.

The fleet of Spain arrived at Cadiz on the 3rd instant, and the rumour there was, that they would put to sea again the latter end of this month ; but, as several of them are very much mauled, I think I shall appear off Cadiz before they can possibly be ready ; and it is my intention to send two or three frigates to cruize between Carthagená and Cape Tres-Forcás, to prevent any impression being made on you from Carthagená. Major Smith has (I conclude from want of information) mis-stated the naval force left by Commodore Nelson to escort the garrison of Porto Ferrajo, having omitted the *Petterel*, *Speedy*, *L'Utile*, and *Rose* cutter ; which is of no great importance, as a substantial force will be found useful in covering the rear of the convoy from small cruizers.

Lest the same indiscretion should happen that attended my despatch, of a subordinate captain communicating its purport, I enclose my instructions to you.

I have the honour, &c.

J. J.

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*To Captain Fremantle.*

Victory, in the Tagus, 14th March, 1797.

Sir,

The orders given by Commodore Nelson, and those you have probably received from the



Admiralty by the messenger who conveys instructions from Mr. Secretary Dundas to Lieut.-General De Burgh, copies of which are enclosed, leave me very little to add with respect to the evacuation of Porto Ferrajo, and your passage down the Mediterranean, except to recommend the putting as many troops on board the two frigates and three sloops of war as they can conveniently stow, Major Smith having represented that there is not a sufficient tonnage of transports to convey the whole, in which I conceive he errs, for it cannot be necessary to give more than a ton and a half for so short a voyage ; less would serve on an emergency at this season of the year, keeping one-third upon deck in the night. Having no late intelligence touching the employment of the enemy's naval force within the Mediterranean, I do not give you any instruction respecting your route. Commodore Nelson, by coasting the northern shore, did not see either Frenchman or Spaniard ; while the Southampton, Dolphin, and Dromedary, fell in with three Spanish frigates off Algiers, as did the Dido and Sardine with two others off the Zaffarine Islands ; I therefore leave you entirely to your own judgment, guided by such information as you may be in possession of. Reports from Cadiz state a great number

of the Spanish fleet not to have suffered much, and that they talk of being at sea the latter end of this month, which I scarcely think within possibility ; for, exclusively of their damages in the action, they are short of provisions, water, and stores, and we know that their movements are not very rapid, or their resources great. We are getting on fast with our repairs, and I think shall be in motion on or about the 25th ; and I will place the squadron in such a situation as to prevent your receiving any interruption from the fleet at Cadiz, and endeavour to detach some frigates to protect you between Cape de Gatt and Cape Tresforças, where, from the narrowness of the sea, you are most liable to meet with a check, if the enemy is apprized of your motions in time to lay a plan for intercepting you ; which every hour's delay will render more probable. The conversation (said to have been concerted) between Mr. Wyndham and the French Minister at Florence I never liked. It had more the appearance of a snare to entrap the garrison of Porto Ferrajo, than a real design to facilitate its retreat ; and the late unfortunate events at Mantua will suggest an enterprize, if such measure were not before in contemplation. In short, procrastination is big with danger on all sides ; and I

have only to hope that the General will put himself and his garrison under your protection, the moment he is authorized so to do, when, I am sure, no time will be lost in making the best of your way down the Straits.

I am, &c.

J. J

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*To the Right Hon. the Speaker of the House  
of Commons.*

Victory, in the Tagus, 22d March, 1797.

Sir,

To have merited the approbation of the House of Commons of Great Britain *twice* in the same war, falls to the lot of few men who hold high command in his Majesty's fleets; and I beg you will assure the House how highly I prize the great honour I have received, and that I will not fail to convey to the admirals, captains, officers, seamen, marines, and soldiers under my command, the very honourable testimony the House has been pleased to express of their skill, bravery, and discipline, in the successful action with the fleet of Spain on the 14th February last.

Permit me to make my best acknowledg-

ments to you, Sir, for the very obliging terms in which you have made this communication ; and,

I have the honour to be,

With great respect, Sir, &c.

JOHN JERVIS.

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*To the Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain.*

Victory, in the Tagus, 28th March, 1797.

My Lord,

I request your lordship to convey (in terms I want power to express) the very high sense entertained by me, the flag-officers, captains, officers, seamen, marines, and soldiers, I have the honour to command, of the resolution come to by the House of Lords, on occasion of the action with the fleet of Spain on the 14th February ; and your lordship has a just claim to my particular acknowledgments for your very kind expressions towards me in the communication thereof.

I have the honour to be,

With the greatest respect,

Your lordship's, &c.

JOHN JERVIS.

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*To the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor of London.*

Victory, 28th March, 1797.

My Lord,

I am honoured with your lordship's letter of the 11th instant, enclosing the unanimous resolutions of the Common Council of the City of London, so honourable to myself, the flag-officers, captains, &c., present in the action with the fleet of Spain on the 14th February; and I desire you will convey the just sense we all feel on receiving such high marks of approbation from that respectable body.

The sword they intend to honour me with I shall prize beyond expression, and be at all times ready to draw it in defence of the rights and privileges of my fellow-citizens, in the list of whom the flag-officers, under my command, are proud to be enrolled.

I have the honour to be,

Your lordship's, &c.

JOHN JERVIS.

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The following secret orders will make evident the important and extensive effects of the victory off St. Vincent. It appears that our frigates could now, with safety, be ordered into the Adriatic, notwithstanding the still great

numerical superiority of the combined fleets of France and Spain.

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*To Captain Hope.*

(MOST SECRET).

*By Sir John Jervis, K.B., &c.*

You are, in pursuance of instructions from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, to proceed with the ships, &c., under your orders, to the Adriatic, for the purpose of protecting the vessels employed in the removal of troops and supplies, to and from the different places where the Imperial troops may be likely to act during the ensuing campaign.

But whereas I have received intelligence of a possibility that the enemy may be in possession of Trieste, you are not to proceed to that place without the utmost caution, procuring every possible information, in your approach to the entrance of the Adriatic, from the Venetian islands on the coast of Albania, or Dalmatia; and, should you ascertain that the French have possession, you are to cruize, for the annoyance of the enemy, on the coast of Ancona, or any part of the Adriatic, the Morea, or channel of Malta, taking care not to be surprised by a superior force.

Whenever you gain certain intelligence of the Austrians having repossessed Trieste (in case the enemy should have wrested it from them), you are to repair thither (if the Adriatic should not be so blocked up by a naval force superior to your own, as to render the attempt hazardous), and communicate to the officer commanding the Imperial troops the purposes for which you have been sent, and to co-operate with him in the execution of such measures as may, on a due consideration, be judged to be most advisable for assisting the operations of the Imperial army, and for annoying the enemy, by every means in your power.

And whereas their lordships have reason to think, notwithstanding the treaty concluded between his Sicilian Majesty and the French government, that no difficulty would be found in obtaining supplies in the Neapolitan ports, provided the number of ships sent to such ports shall not exceed the number limited by that treaty; you will complete your provisions, &c., at those ports accordingly, whenever you stand in need. But, if any difficulty should arise on this head, you may have recourse to Malta, or the Morea, where that inconvenience is likely to be removed.

You are to correspond with his Majesty's

ministers at the courts of Naples and Venice, with the consuls at Trieste and Zante; from the latter you will receive honest intelligence, and the best he can procure from the Venetian states; and you are to remain on this service until farther orders, unless a real want of provisions, or circumstances relating to the enemy, which I cannot foresee, should render your retreat down the Mediterranean a matter of necessity, giving me information of your proceedings by any safe opportunities that may occur.

Given off Cadiz, 22 April, 1797.

JOHN JERVIS.

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*To Don Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho.*

Ville de Paris, off Cadiz, 9th June, 1797.

Sir,

From Captain Campbell, of the Triton, who joined last evening (and sailed for Tangier a few hours afterwards), I had the honour to receive your Excellency's letter of the 1st instant, and I am very happy to learn by it, that you have in contemplation to employ your line-of-battle ships on the south-west coast of Portugal. Perhaps it would, under present circumstances, be advisable to advance them as far as Cape



Spartel, where, on the approach of Richery, with the squadron from Toulon, said to be en route to Carthage, they would be more à porté to me; and, under the command of Captain Campbell (if his rank will admit of it), the common cause would derive the greatest advantage from his active zeal and manly courage.

I am very much penetrated with the gracious manner his Royal Highness the Prince of the Brazils has been pleased to receive my petition, in favour of the eldest son of Madame Meyer, who figured formerly in a splendid sphere; but, I fear, is now sinking under pining disease and penury, and it is certain the bounty of his royal highness cannot be better applied.

Having received intelligence that the French and Spanish privateers in Cadiz Bay were preparing to escape the vigilance of the squadron under my command, by taking out their masts, and passing under the arch of the bridge at Leon, taking them in again when through, with intention to go out at the entrance of San Pedro, and that some Moorish vessels, with corn, had got in that way, I have ordered the Meleager and Raven to anchor in front of that channel, and it is now become extremely difficult for the market boats of Seville and San Lucar to pass along the coast of Rota (several of them having

been captured), or to profit by the canal of San Pedro.\*

I have the honour, &c.

JOHN JERVIS.

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In the month of November, 1797, the Dey of Algiers showed symptoms of hostility ; when Lord St. Vincent sent Captain Thompson, of the *Leander*, with a small squadron, to lay before the city, giving him the following clear and decided orders. In consequence of this step, his Highness was induced to alter his conduct, and harmony was restored.

*To Captain Thomas B. Thompson, his Majesty's Ship Leander.*

*By the Earl of St. Vincent, K.B. Admiral of the Blue, &c.*

(MOST SECRET AND CONFIDENTIAL.)

Whereas Mr. Master, His Majesty's Consul-General at Algiers, has represented to me that his Highness the Dey has made the most extravagant, unjust, and inadmissible demands upon the government of Great Britain, inter-

\* The city and fortifications of Cadiz are insulated by the artificial canal of San Pedro.

mixed with unfriendly expressions, even to menaces of hostility, if he does not obtain the sums of money he has laid claim to early in the ensuing year :—

You are hereby required and directed to appear before Algiers with the Hamadryad, and one of the largest sloops of war under your order, and endeavour to have an interview with Mr. Consul Master, and concert such proper measures to be pursued as his situation may require; whether to have an audience of the Dey, and explain with firmness the unreasonableness of his demands, and the exposure of his trade and marine to annihilation, if he is rash enough to commit the most trifling act of hostility against the persons or property of his Majesty's subjects; to expose the acts and intrigues of the Spanish and French agents, and Jewish merchants who conduct the trade of Algiers; or to embark Mr. Consul Master, his suite and baggage, with any British subjects and their property who may wish to make their retreat.

In your conferences with the Dey, it will be absolutely necessary to preserve your temper, although he should show the most violent and indecent passion, but not to give way to the absurd positions he may lay down, or to admit

that his Majesty's ships have, on any occasion, committed a breach of neutrality; and, finding all remonstrances ineffectual, and that his Highness persists in his exorbitant demands, and carries the threats notified to the Consul-general into execution, by offering any insult to his Majesty's flag, or other flagrant violation of the treaties subsisting between the two governments, you are to make known to his Highness that from the instant such an act of hostility should be committed by his orders, the war will be declared between Great Britain and Algiers, and that you have my instructions to punish the injustice and temerity of his Highness, by seizing, burning, sinking, or otherwise destroying, all ships bearing the Algerine flag; and to block up the ports of his Highness, and to cut off all commerce and navigation between them and the ports of other nations; and having fulfilled the object of your mission, you are to lose no time in communicating to Lieutenant General O'Hara, Governor of Gibraltar, and to me, the event thereof, by despatching the sloop of war for that purpose.

Given on board the Ville de Paris, in the Tagus, the 16th day of November, 1797.

(Signed)

ST. VINCENT.

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By the treaty of Lagos Bay, the Spanish prisoners taken in the action of the 14th of February were all landed, on condition of their never serving again until regularly exchanged. But it would appear, by the following extract of a letter to the Hon. Horace Walpole, that the Spanish government was quite regardless of this compact.

*To the Hon. Horace Walpole.*

The correspondence between Don Juan de Mazerado and myself, on the subject of the Spanish prisoners landed at Lagos, is, I hope, now closed. I send you a copy of his letter, with my answer thereto. It is evident that Spanish faith will soon be as proverbially base and perfidious as Punic of old, or Corsican in modern days, for the prisoners taken both in Trinidad and on the 14th of February are now serving in their fleet. The Lord have mercy on them, should they fall into my hands ! for I will show them none !

Of the Principe de la Paz, that worthless minister of a worthless monarch, he says, “ since he has begun to scold, I am become doubtful of his sex ; does his Highness imagine that an unprovoked, impolitic, and monstrously unjust war on the part of Spain will be carried on

by me in making unmeaning complaints? If he does, he is very much mistaken."

Yet, with all this outward appearance of austerity, he never omitted an opportunity of showing attentions to, and conciliating the good will of, the Spaniards. He had a very great esteem for Don Juan de Mazerado, to whom he wrote as follows:—

"The new signature with which I subscribe myself by the grace of my royal master, makes no alteration in the esteem and regard with which I have the honour to subscribe myself,

"Your's, &c.

"ST. VINCENT."

## CHAPTER XII.

Anecdotes of Lord St. Vincent—His attention to the Health of his People — Introduction of the Sick Bay, or apartment peculiarly adapted for the Sick on board Ship — His encouragement of zeal—His Answer to Keats—Comparison between St. Vincent and Vernon—Anecdote of the latter being dismissed from the Service—Lord St. Vincent's extensive command—His Hospitality and Munificence to Foreigners—His polished manners—His dislike of ceremony—Accused of want of sincerity—The charge common to all men in high station—His attention to trifles—His humanity to Prisoners.

IN order to vary the nature of my narrative, I will here introduce a few anecdotes and details touching the personal character and bearing of Lord St. Vincent, in his private as well as public capacity; setting them down without any minute regard to chronological order or dates.

It has been said that Lord St. Vincent was rough in his manner when at sea. He may have been so occasionally, for he had rough materials to deal with; and this manner, be it remembered, was the remains of the Barrington and Boscawen schools, when a midshipman

was thought too fine a gentleman because he came to dine with his admiral in a white shirt, and was desired to go down and put on one of check.

He was fretful if he saw any thing done in a careless or slovenly manner, whether at his table, or on service ; and if he could not reclaim a young man in these particulars, he gave him up. He could not endure to hear of the word “trouble :” there ought, he said, to be no such word in the naval dictionary. When any one said they could not do a thing they were desired to do, he used to tell them to “*rub out* ‘*can’t*’ and put in ‘*try*.’” He would forgive an officer for losing or springing a topmast in carrying sail ; but he never overlooked splitting a topsail in handling or reefing it, because he said such accidents were the effect either of ignorance or carelessness.

He was a great enemy to intemperance, and above all things abhorred gluttony. A visitor once caused himself to be helped three times from the sideboard by the butler, after the dish was removed from the table ; and he was never invited again.

At table his observations were always instructive and good humoured, though he invariably repressed any forwardness or freedom in



young people ; but, on the other hand, he encouraged them when they appeared abashed, from too strong a sense of awe at the presence of their superiors.

Yet he had great forbearance on occasions when men of his temper and station might have been excused for feeling annoyed, and for showing that feeling.

The late Lord Gardner, who commanded the *Hero* in Sir Richard Strachan's action, was a great favourite with Lord St. Vincent. The latter, one day, apologised to his friend for having given him a very bad dinner, and his lordship received the following candid answer with great good humour. "You may say that, my lord ! it was a very bad dinner, and wretchedly put on the table. Three ducks in a dish ! only think of that !"

I remember his saying one day at the dinner-table at Rochetts, speaking of the year 1782, "that was a memorable year for me. I committed three great faults about that time : I got knighted, I got married, and I got into parliament.\*

His anecdotes of some of his cotemporaries were often very amusing. One or two here oc-

\* His lordship, however, did *not* get into parliament till the year 1784.

cur to me, which I will repeat. Sir George Walton had his flag, or broad pendant, flying at Spithead, when a nobleman in the neighbourhood sent his gamekeeper with half a fat buck. Sir George sent back a suitable message of thanks, but the keeper begged the steward to inform the admiral that he expected a *complement* for himself. "A complement, does he?" said the admiral—who was more economical of his money than of his powder,—"then he shall have one; go and tell the captain to salute him with five guns when he leaves the ship."

Lord St. Vincent had a horror of a twice-told tale. He was one day telling a story to the late Admiral Sir George Murray (one of our best and bravest); and seeing by his countenance that he had heard it before, he said to him, "My dear George, I see you have heard this story before. Now I love you very dearly, but if ever you suffer me to grow garrulous, I will never forgive you."

Neave, his signal lieutenant, one day gave him an indirect answer to a question; on which Lord St. Vincent hastily said, "Sir, you are as bad as the quaker." Neave, not at all disconcerted by this reprimand, replied in a slow and solemn manner peculiar to himself, "Why, what did the quakers do, my lord?" His lordship

was so much amused at this sang froid, that he good humouredly said, "Come and sit down, and I'll tell you." He then related to him some one of the numerous stories which are told at the expence of that harmless and inoffensive sect.

No admiral ever paid more attention to the health of his people than Lord St. Vincent did at all times. He was the first to introduce a regular sick berth on board of our ships of war. Before his time, there was no particular place assigned for the sick, and each person slept in the place where his hammock usually hung, or perhaps, to be more out of the way, he was removed close in to the ship's side. When Lord St. Vincent commanded the fleet off Cadiz, this evil was effectually remedied, and a proper airy and spacious apartment, called the sick bay, was fitted up in each of the line-of-battle ships. Here the sick were so completely secured from any annoyance, that they rapidly recovered, under the skilful management of a superior description of medical men who were about that time encouraged to enter the navy. The sick, under the old system, were visited, and in many ships placed in the cock-pit, where the surgeon had his medicine chests, and performed all his operations ; but it was evident that the want of air, space, and daylight, rendered this the very

worst situation in the ship, except when actually engaged with the enemy.

The sick bay is now one of the most cleanly and comfortable apartments in the ship. The surgeon has all his medicines arranged, the same, in every respect, as an apothecary's shop; and the sick and the convalescent have as much enjoyment as it is possible to give them with our limited means. Much of their time is spent in reading amusing and improving books, no others being ever allowed in the bay; and, if a poor man is long confined to this apartment, he very often comes out much improved in mind as well as in health.

There was a remarkable trait in the character of Lord St. Vincent, which tended greatly to extend the energies of naval officers under his command. Whenever he saw any one zealous, but diffident, he always gave him encouragement; but, if arrogance and self-sufficiency appeared, he rebuked and repressed it with an irresistible moral power.

Lord St. Vincent never liked to hear of an officer getting married in war time. He would say, when any one asked permission to go home to England for a short period, "Sir, you want to go on shore and get married, and then

you won't be worth your salt." There was no temptation which he deemed of sufficient strength to excuse an officer for abandoning his profession. Keats, the late governor of Greenwich Hospital, stood deservedly high in his estimation. He was offered the government of Malta, on the death of Sir Alexander Ball. He consulted Lord St. Vincent, whose answer was — "No, my dear Keats; Malta is not the way to the House of Peers."

When Mr. Pitt selected Sir John Jervis and Sir Charles Grey, who were his political opponents in the House of Commons, to conduct an expedition against the French West India Islands, he may have been influenced by the same feeling which induced Sir Robert Walpole to appoint Vernon to the expedition against Porto Bello. Vernon was more violent than Lord St. Vincent in the discharge of his duties in Parliament, and had less of the conciliating manners so requisite in the conducting of a joint expedition. Hence his failure at Panama. The choice of his officers evinced good sense and discernment on the part of Mr. Pitt: bickerings like those above referred to were avoided, and the result was consequently more prosperous. The minister of George III., though fully aware

of the political bias of the men he chose, was quite certain that both were men of honour, and that they would never allow party feeling to interfere in the performance of their duty to their country. In fact, Mr. Pitt had sat long in the House of Commons with Sir John Jervis, and knew the history both of his public and private life. He saw the character of the man, and that his judgment was clear, his intellect and courage of the highest order, and his integrity unspotted.

It has been suggested to me that there was a similarity of character between Vernon and St. Vincent. There may no doubt have been, and it is not improbable that the ardent mind of young Jervis was influenced, when at school, by the songs of triumph, at that time so much in vogue, in praise of Vernon—

“ The brave fellow,  
“ That did take the Porto Bello.”

This event happened in 1740; and it may readily be supposed, that while young Jervis was at school, from that year to 1748, when he went to sea, the exploits and the hard fate of Vernon occupied much of the public attention; for it is not generally known that the brilliant services of that gallant admiral were rewarded by his being struck off the list by a weak and

wicked government.\* There is a letter extant, from Admiral Vernon to the Duke of Bedford, then first lord of the Admiralty, and one to Mr. Corbett, the secretary of that Board, containing some curious matter. A dialogue between the Duke of Bedford and Admiral Vernon is very edifying, as showing the feeble reasoning and contemptible mode of action adopted in those days. Vernon was supposed to have been the author of two pamphlets reflecting on the conduct of the Admiralty; and the question whether he was the author or not, is distinctly put, not only in an official letter from Mr. Corbett, the secretary, but also verbally to the admiral, by the Duke of Bedford in person. The admiral very properly refused to answer a question which no one had any right to ask. This refusal the government chose to assume as an acknowledgment of guilt; and the gallant Vernon very shortly afterwards received a letter from Mr. Corbett, announcing that his Majesty had been pleased to direct their Lordships to strike his name out of the list of flag-officers. Vernon retired to his residence in Suffolk, and, so far as I can discover, was never afterwards restored

\* See Harvey's Naval History, vol. iv., p. 451, *et seq.*, in which a part of the correspondence between Vernon, the Duke of Newcastle, and Sir William Pulteney, is given.

to his rank. This is a singular instance of national ingratitude.\*

I have been led into this little digression to show that the parallel between these two great men is just in some respects, but widely diverging in others. Lord St. Vincent was always remarkable for an evenness of temper and equanimity on *great* occasions. If ordered on a joint expedition with the army, he would never have quarrelled with the general, as Vernon did with Wentworth; and if wounded in his feelings by a public Board, as St. Vincent certainly and most undeservedly was, he would not have written an insolent letter to the first lord of the Admiralty, his superior officer. In any other respect, I am willing to admit that young Jervis may have formed his character on the model of Vernon, who, like himself, owed much of his celebrity to his manly and straightforward dealing in the House of Commons.

It may not be unworthy of notice, as an odd coincidence, that both these illustrious admirals returned from their respective and successful

\* It is remarkable that neither Beatson nor Schomberg mention this fact. I have read somewhere a letter from Vernon to the first lord of the Admiralty, couched in very intemperate terms. I cannot now refer to it; but it was not sufficient to have justified the government in the harsh and vindictive steps they took to get rid of a troublesome opponent, who was, at the same time, one of the most valued servants of the country.



commands in the West Indies, in the *Boyne*, which was the name of their flag-ships: that of *Vernon* was, however, only an 80-gun ship; that of *Sir John Jervis* a 98.

All our failures in former wars may be attributed to the irresponsibility of our chiefs, to councils of war, and to the jealousies existing between the army and navy. In this respect our service had wonderfully improved. Men were then selected solely on account of their talents to command, and to cause those under them to obey. *Vernon* failed at *Panama* because he had *Wentworth* and a council of war to oppose him. Had *Sir John Jervis* and *Sir Charles Grey* acted with the same folly and obstinacy, the result must have been similar. The fault committed was, not recalling the guilty parties, and having the affair investigated. We are growing wiser from experience; and perhaps one of the finest traits in the character of *Sir John Jervis* was that thorough command of temper—that union of firmness and good humour—which consolidated and cemented the army and navy, as it were, into one profession—one firm body; so that not even the petulance and insolence of a general officer could move him to an angry reply. He possessed, in a very remarkable degree, a

spirit of conciliation and energy, which produced or excited to the noblest actions.

I hope it will not be thought that I mean to draw an invidious comparison, when I assert that more talent was displayed in the Mediterranean fleet than in any other command. This could not have arisen entirely from local circumstances. The ports of Toulon, Carthagenæ, Cadiz, and Malta, required watching; so did Brest, L'Orient, Rochefort, and the Texel. But, with every respect for the officers who had the superintendence of the ports in the Bay of Biscay and the North Seas, there was nothing observable there to be compared with the high state of discipline, resource, enterprize, or knowledge of the enemy's motions, existing on the coast, from Lisbon to Alexandria. The names of Nelson, Trowbridge, Hallowell, Ball, and others, could scarcely have attained the illustrious height at which they now stand, had the qualifications of their owners been appreciated by a mind less endowed than that of St. Vincent.

There was one point in Lord St. Vincent's character which peculiarly fitted him for commander-in-chief on our most important stations: he had no disposition to hoard up his money, but always entertained his own officers, as well as foreign visitors, with the greatest liberality.

This may appear to be a matter of trivial importance ; but, when duly considered, it ranks high as a public virtue. It promotes harmony, and makes people well acquainted with each other ; tending greatly, at the same time, to the honour of the country.

Having received a very liberal education, up to the time of his going to sea, and having been always accustomed to keep the best company, Sir John Jervis was, in his early days, considered a highly-finished gentleman. He had visited the continent during the intervals of peace, and as his parliamentary duties would permit. I am not aware, however, that he was acquainted with more of the continental languages than French and Italian, nor do I know that he was a perfect master of the latter.

I have before observed, that he was not fond of ceremony ; and, when a guard of honour was to be turned out for him on one occasion, he desired they might be dismissed, and reserved for an officer whom he mentioned by name, saying, "*he* can do nothing without it !"

He has, I know, been accused of jesuitical dealing, by holding out hopes which he never realized. This charge, I cannot think, was ever founded on justice. Much allowance must be made for a man holding a high and confidential

situation. There never was, perhaps, a first lord of the Admiralty, who was not accused of breaking his word.

There was a peculiar dignity of manner in Lord St. Vincent, which, united to his personal appearance, few could help admiring. This was not only conspicuous on his quarter-deck, but was carried with him into his beautiful retirement at Rochetts, where, to the last moment of his prolonged life, he supported the character and dignity of a British nobleman. His hospitality there was unbounded, yet without the least appearance of ostentation or extravagance. For the last ten years of his life, having sold his house in Mortimer-street, he came very little to London, and his society consisted of such friends as he invited down to see him, or who knew they should receive a hearty welcome. There was in his table an exquisite neatness and elegance. A handsome service of plate was, on most occasions, in common use, or sometimes a beautiful set of Dresden. On these occasions, however, he was greatly offended, when he observed any approach to familiarity between subordinates and their superiors. Sir George Cockburn, and one or two other lords of the Admiralty, dined with him one day at Rochetts, in company with some

persons well known to them, but not, as his lordship thought, qualified to address them in the style they did at dinner: "Cockburn, wine?" "Osborn, wine?" "And then, Sir," said he to me, "when they drank to them, they gave a familiar nod with their heads, quite incompatible with my ideas of respect and propriety." This reminded me, that the Marquis of Wellesley, when he went out with me to Cadiz in the *Donegal*, complained that the nodding of the head, in taking wine at dinner, instead of the well-bred but old-fashioned bow, was growing into a vile habit among young people. His lordship too, I remember, liked the present mode of using finger-glasses quite as little; and I cannot but think the habit of using them for the *mouth* ought to be wholly exploded.

Lord St. Vincent thought trifles were not to be neglected. He once observed to me, that "R. N., upon the cards of naval officers was very absurd, and, whenever he wrote to any in the profession, I think he always added "of his Majesty's navy," after their names. "R. N., Sir," said his lordship, "is flippant and pert, and means nothing."

Although no man was more hospitable, or lived more like a nobleman, in every sense of the word, than Lord St. Vincent, yet he never

could endure to see waste in any shape. Two of his rules I can remember, which were written up in the servants' hall :—

“ The servants are welcome to eat and drink as much as they please, but nothing is to be wasted.

“ No improper conversation is to be suffered.”

Of course, any deviation from temperance was punished with dismissal.

He was an economist, in the truest sense of the word. Whether in the palace or the cottage, whether an admiral and commander-in-chief, or a midshipman, he ever held himself bound to inculcate these principles ; and no one ever more fully proved their value, either nationally or individually. His mind was equal to cope with any subject, however great ; and in serving his fellow-creatures, nothing was too minute for his attention.

When Sir Isaac Coffin went into Parliament, Lord St. Vincent said to him, “ Now, be sure you never bring forward any motion but upon the most solid information, and a moral certainty of support.”

He once said to me, “ When you address a letter to the Admiralty, endeavour to get the whole matter compressed into the first page, for, if they do not see your name at the bottom,

it is most likely you will not gain much attention : it will be thrown into the waste basket."

This is a very important hint to all officers, especially as coming from a first lord. There are many who are notoriously prolix without knowing it, both in their writing and speaking, and yet are grievously offended if you hint it to them. An officer once kept me four hours, detailing his own exploits, and then asked me to give him four hours more, which I could not do. I have condensed the whole of his gallant actions thus related into ten minutes' reading!

In humanity to prisoners of war, and to all other prisoners, none, I may venture to say, ever exceeded Lord St. Vincent; and this is an example which I wish to see followed and established, as a *lex non scripta*—a known duty of every Briton. We have only to deplore, that the state of society at that period, the awfully demoralized condition of the officers and seamen, and the heavy responsibility which lay on Lord St. Vincent, as a commander-in-chief, and first lord of the Admiralty, rendered it imperative on his part to punish, with severity, any infraction of the law, or the slightest attempt at insubordination.

## CHAPTER XIII.

The mutiny at Cadiz — Mr. Pitt's motion in Parliament: the question not clearly understood, nor fairly stated — Mr. Giffard's error on the subject of biscuit — The affair of the Kingsfisher in the Tagus — Conduct of John Maitland — Remarks — The first symptoms of mutiny in the fleet before Cadiz — Conduct of Captain Daeres, of the *Barfleur* — of Lord St. Vincent — Affair of the *St. George*, *Peard*, and *Hatley* — Fidelity of the marines — Court-martial — Speech of Lord St. Vincent to the mutineers — His promptitude in carrying the sentence into effect — Divine service, execution, and action with the enemy — Order to Sir William Parker — Letter to Lady Spencer — Origin of the dispute with Sir John Orde — Capture of the *Prince George's* launch — Skirmish with the Spanish gun-boats — Unfortunate results — General order — Ill-advised proceeding of Sir John Orde.

As I have given already, in the *Naval History of Great Britain*, a full account of the mutiny off Cadiz, I shall not have occasion to repeat much of that event in the present work; but there are a few supplemental observations, which will be necessary to show the harmony which existed between Mr. Pitt, at that time his Majesty's prime minister, and Sir John Jervis, whose fleet had, while cruising before Cadiz, received the fatal contagion from home.



Mr. Pitt moved in Parliament, in June, 1797, for leave to bring in a bill for the better prevention and punishment of all traitorous attempts to excite sedition and mutiny in his Majesty's naval service. He entered into some details, in order to prove the existence of a settled design to spread disaffection and disorganization into our fleets and armies. In this he was fully borne out by the facts, as I shall have occasion to show very shortly. In the mean time, it will be right to repeat, not in vindication of mutiny, but as an act of substantial justice to the sailors, that they had not been fairly dealt by; if they had, sedition and rebellion would have found no countenance among them. The proof of this is to be found in their immediate and cheerful return to their duty, the moment the demands of the Channel fleet were complied with, and the feeling manner in which they behaved to their officers during the whole of the period of excitement.

It was an error common among many well-informed men of that day, to suppose that the sailors had no real or just cause of complaint, inasmuch as, after they had obtained their demands of an increased allowance of provisions, biscuit was thrown overboard from the ships of war. It was thence inferred, that the

sailors had more than they could eat. Mr. Giffard repeats this error, on the authority "of an old Post Captain." — (See *Life of Pitt*, vol. v., p. 159). But the old Post Captain must have made little use of his eyes, if he had not seen biscuit going astern, when he was a little midshipman, watching the gulls from the taffrail. I can remember it, from the time I first remember salt water. The fact is, that one of the component parts of sea-biscuit, at that time, was meal ground from peas, and this formed a hard and flinty vein in the bread, which would yield to nothing short of Mr. M'Adam's hammer. The sailors, when they found these pieces of flint in their mouths, always consigned them to the deep; but the savings of their bread, which they did not consume, were carefully preserved, and exchanged with the market-people for vegetables. I never heard of their parting with their meat, or suet, or flour, or butter, or sugar, in the same manner, and I venture respectfully to differ with the highest authority on this subject. Nelson appears to have been of my opinion, and expressed the same to his late Majesty, King William IV., then Duke of Clarence.— (Clarke and M'Arthur, 8vo. edit., p. 423). His Royal Highness says, in a letter to Nelson,

July 4, 1797, when speaking of the then recent mutiny at Spithead, Plymouth, and the Nore, "But I cannot pass over unnoticed your remarks about short weights and measures. Every officer must know, that by their old allowance the men on board the King's ships had more provisions than they could consume, and that they always sold a part, therefore an increase of provisions was not wanted. I will not hurt your mind by relating the horrid particulars of the late events, but shall conclude the subject by observing, that in your next you will unsay what you have too hastily expressed. I dread nothing, as the government here appear to pursue proper measures, and I am convinced St. Vincent will keep up his fleet in proper discipline. *Lenity at first is severity at last.*"

I remember conversing with Lord St. Vincent on this subject. He had received similar information respecting the superabundance of bread allowed to the sailors, and, I believe, really thought they had too much. In this I never could concur with him, as they are accustomed to a much more plentiful, indeed almost unlimited supply, in the merchant's service; and this, together with the liberty to go on shore whenever they can be spared from the duty, makes them prefer the latter to the King's ser-

vice. The difference of wages is, no doubt, a great object; but that difference is very frequently, unless a man is careful, more apparent than real—the charges and deductions, and prices of articles supplied, such as clothing, tobacco, and spirits, being enormous.

The Duke of Clarence and Earl St. Vincent had both derived their information, in all probability, from the same sources, and both were misinformed on this subject. I never could live on the ship's allowance; and I never knew any sailor or marine admit that he had enough to eat, under the old system, though they seldom consumed all their biscuit.

One of the earliest and most melancholy instances of mutiny on the Lisbon station, after the general explosion had taken place at home, was on board the Kingsfisher sloop of war, while lying at anchor in the Tagus. Captain John Maitland, who very lately died a rear-admiral, had the command of the vessel, and finding among his crew some very unequivocal symptoms of turbulence, he ordered the hands to be turned up to weigh the anchor. They refused to obey. He immediately singled out one of the ringleaders, and ordered him to be seized up for punishment; but, when this had been done, one of the petty officers went up de-

liberately to the grating, and cut the seizings, to release the prisoner. On this Maitland drew his dirk, and laid the offender dead, or mortally wounded, on the deck. Two other men were also severely wounded by him. He was well supported by his officers, and the whole mutiny was instantly quelled. The marines remained, as they have ever done, faithful to their King. Having thus subdued her rebellious crew by this well-timed but severe measure, he proceeded to sea, not at all afraid of trusting himself with his refractory people. On joining the fleet off Cadiz, he demanded a court-martial on himself for having put the man to death. It was granted; and he was acquitted, but admonished to be more temperate in future. Lord St. Vincent certainly did not participate in the feeling which dictated the admonition, for I am credibly informed that he invited the members of the court-martial to dinner, and, after the cloth was removed, gave as a toast, "Maitland's radical cure."

A few words, by way of explanation, are here necessary. An officer is bound, never, under any circumstances, to give up the command of his ship to his inferiors. Any attempt to resist his authority is mutiny, rebellion, or treason; and, if he can secure the persons of

the guilty, and bring them before a tribunal of justice, it is ever the most desirable mode of proceeding; but, if he cannot effect this, and his own life, and the well-being of the service, are endangered, he must, in that case, have recourse to physical force, and follow the noble example of John Maitland. But, let it never be forgotten, that the officer who is thus unfortunately reduced to become an executioner, and to dip his hand in the blood of his fellow-creature and countryman, however justifiable he may be deemed in the eye of God and his fellow men, stands no chance of regaining his own wonted serenity of spirit. To prevent is better than to cure. Good management, kindness, firmness, attention to their wants, and a little indulgence and forbearance; making some allowance for their ignorance; and, above all, making the officers do their duty with exactness, and without violence; these will seldom or never fail to keep down any spirit of mutiny.

I remember, at the time the account of this event reached England, I was first lieutenant of the Raven sloop of war, with my late unfortunate friend, Captain J. W. T. Dickson, who was shipwrecked and drowned in the Apollo, in 1805. We were cruising in the North Seas, when the captain fancied there were some ap-

pearances of insubordination among the crew, which was partly composed of ringleaders (in the then recent mutiny) from the ships of the line at the Nore. He immediately turned the hands up, and thus addressed them: "My lads, I find you are inclined to disobey me, and your officers. I have only a few words to say to you: if you attempt to resist my authority, I shall rush into the very thick of you, with a dagger in each hand, and I will stab right and left, until you submit." We had no mutiny.

It was in consequence of the turbulent state of his ships' crews, during the blockade of Cadiz, that Lord St. Vincent began to bombard that unfortunate and beautiful town. He caused two bomb-vessels to be sent out to him from England, and with these, and his guard-boats, and his in-shore squadron, he contrived to keep, as he said, the devil out of their minds. It was on this account, also, that he planned the expedition to Teneriffe, which would have succeeded but for the bad weather and calms, which prevented Nelson laying his ships in front of the town of Santa Cruz. It was ascertained that the treasures of two Spanish galleons, from Vera Cruz or Mexico, had been deposited there; and this would have rewarded

the victors, had Nelson's usual good fortune attended his daring courage.

The battle of the 14th February, which had given such general satisfaction to the nation at large, was succeeded by the tremendous mutiny of the British fleet at Spithead; its effects were not felt, however, in the fleet before Cadiz, until the months of May and June following, when some letters, written in a clear and business-like hand, supposed to have been brought out in the *Alcmene* frigate, reached the fleet, addressed to the captains of the fore-castle, and other non-commissioned officers of the ships composing the fleet under the command of Lord St. Vincent. Captain Dacres, of the *Barfleur*, was the first to detect these incendiary epistles, and, delaying the delivery, sent an officer to the commander-in-chief, for instructions how to act with respect to them. Lord St. Vincent instantly made the general signal for lieutenants, and gave out an order to the effect that the letters which had been intercepted were to be immediately forwarded to those persons for whom they were intended; and the order concluded by stating that the commander-in-chief trusted he knew how to check any appearance of insubordination, should such occur.

This resolute and determined act convinced



the turbulent that they had a man to deal with who was no driveller, and that he knew what he was about; but, as the Channel fleet had had their day, and the North Sea fleet had gone up to the Nore with their officers under arrest, the tars off Cadiz were determined to make the attempt to have their own way, come what might of it. Accordingly, they watched the first plausible excuse they could find, in order to try the strength of their officers' nerves, and see the extent of their own power.

Two men had recently been tried, belonging to the *St. George*, for a breach of the 29th Article of War; and the ship's company assembled in a tumultuous manner on the main deck, calling out for their liberation, as an execution for such a horrible offence would bring disgrace on the ship. Peard, the late gallant vice-admiral, was the captain, and "*Jack Hatley*," as he was always called, was the first lieutenant. These two officers, after admonishing the men on the impropriety of their conduct, but without effect, rushed into the thick of them, each seized two men by the collar, and took care to select such as they saw were ringleaders. The crew, brave as lions in a good cause, proved cowards in this:—they fled to their berths, and left their principals in the

hands of the intrepid officers, by whom they were handed over to that invaluable corps, the marines, afterwards honoured with the title of "Royal," for this and similar instances of fidelity.

A boat was immediately lowered down, and the four prisoners were conveyed to the *Ville de Paris*, on board of which ship, then recently launched, and sent out to receive the admiral's flag, they were put in irons, and kept under the poop awning, in charge of two sentinels, and under the eye of the lieutenant of the watch. A court-martial was ordered for the following day (Saturday); and when the prisoners crossed the quarter-deck to go into the boat, and be conveyed to the flag-ship of the second in command, Lord St. Vincent thus addressed them—"My friends, I hope you are innocent; but, if guilty, I recommend you instantly to set about making your peace with God; for if you are condemned, and there is daylight to hang you, you will die this day."

They were all condemned; but it was late before the trial was over, and the president of the court-martial told them they should have till Monday morning to prepare themselves. Having said this, he carried the proceedings

of the court and the sentence to the commander-in-chief.

Lord St. Vincent said, "Sir, when you passed the sentence, your duty was complete. You had no right to say that the execution of it should be delayed;" and he instantly gave out an order that it should be carried into effect on the following morning, Sunday, at nine o'clock.

It had been the usual practice in the navy for the boats' crews of the different ships which attended on these occasions, to draw lots which of them should go on board the ship where the punishment took place, to man the yard-rope, and assist in the execution; but, on this occasion, the admiral, in order to mark his displeasure at the conduct of the crew of the *St. George*, desired that they alone should be the executioners. He also commanded that, as soon as the culprits were suspended at the yard-arm, every ship in the fleet should proceed to the performance of divine service. Accordingly, at the appointed time, the fatal gun was fired, and the unhappy men were run up in the midst of the smoke of it. Each ship then hoisted a pendant at her mizen peak, the signal for divine service; and all were assembled at prayers. Perhaps a more awful and solemn instance of prompt and necessary

punishment, attended with such impressive circumstances, was never before witnessed in a British fleet.

At this time, our ships were at anchor in front of the batteries of Cadiz, about four miles' distant; and the Spaniards, who had heard of our dissensions, and seen the execution, sent out their gun-boats to attack our in-shore squadron, which consisted of bombs, sloops of war, and launches, well armed. Lord St. Vincent would not allow the duties of the sabbath to be interrupted, but left the in-shore squadron to take care of themselves. The moment, however, that the pendants for prayers were hauled down, he made the signal for all boats, manned and armed, to proceed and attack the enemy. The alacrity, and even the ardour, with which this order was obeyed, was truly gratifying. The men flew into their boats, which, having been previously armed for the execution, were perfectly ready; and the poor Spaniards who came out prepared for a victory, and, supposing our sailors would not fight, were woefully undeceived, and driven back into Cadiz in the greatest confusion.

Will any one presume to say that, on this melancholy occasion, Lord St. Vincent showed either a want of feeling, or a want of religion?

No, he was placed in a situation where, had he shown any whining, morbid sympathy, his ships, his fleet, perhaps his country, would have been lost. But the prompt and energetic sacrifice of four men saved the lives of thousands, and, perhaps, averted the most terrible calamities. His firmness and determination were, under the Almighty's direction, the means of saving his country.

On the occasion of the execution of the mutineers of the defence, he gave out the following order.

*To Rear-Admiral Sir William Parker.*

*(Most secret and confidential, not to be divulged to any one now, or in future, unless necessary to put it in force.) \**

Ville de Paris, off Cadiz, 4th Sept., 1797.

Sir,

It being necessary to take every precaution against any attempt to delay or defeat carrying the sentence of the court-martial into execution, on board his Majesty's ship Defence, this morning, I have ordered all the launches in the fleet, fitted with carronades, to have them

\* I showed this letter to Lord St. Vincent before I copied it from his letter-books, and he observed that he had no longer any objection to its being made public.—ED.

mounted, and to hold them in readiness at a minute's warning; and, should any resistance be made to carry the sentence of the law into execution, of which immediate notice will be given to you, it is my direction that you assume the command of them, taking the captains of your divisions in their barges to your assistance, and that you fire into that part of his Majesty's ship, the Defence, where the persons resisting or refusing obedience to lawful commands may dispose of themselves, and continue your fire until they submit.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient, &c.

J. JERVIS.

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It was after this dreadful example, and indispensable act of justice, that Lord St. Vincent wrote the following letter to Lady Spencer, in which he complains of insubordination among the higher powers; meaning the admirals and captains in his fleet. I have by me letters on this subject, which I do not feel justified in giving to the world; but I will say, that they prove the existence of such a spirit, to an alarming extent.

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*To the Countess Spencer.*

Gibraltar, 27th December, 1798.

Indeed, madam, Lord Spencer's administration of the Admiralty has been the most auspicious to the honour of his Majesty's arms of any on naval record, and I am happy to be considered by your ladyship as an humble instrument of a part of it, in the selection I made of the gallant band who achieved the victory of the 1st of August, to which the memorable action, fought by Sir George Byng, in the Pharo of Messina, bears some resemblance; for Sir George Byng had the choice of the whole British navy, both as to officers and ships, and he showed great judgment in it. But, above all, I pride myself in preserving the health of this fleet, and in maintaining the most exact discipline, while surrounded by mutinous spirits among the lower orders, and factious discontents in a few of the higher. Happily, the force of example in those who have thought and acted right, has enabled this part of the force of the country to perform services, of which there is no parallel in the page of history.

I have the honour to be,  
With the truest respect and esteem,  
Your Ladyship's, &c.,  
ST. VINCENT.

I now come to speak of the origin of the quarrel between Lord St. Vincent and Sir J. Orde. I have related, in the Naval History, the capture of *La Vestale* by the *Terpsichore*, and her subsequent escape into Cadiz. It was known to Lord St. Vincent that she meant to push out some dark night, when the wind was off the land; and the watchful chief ordered each ship to send a launch, with a carronade and a rowing-boat (a barge or a pinnace), to take up a position off the harbour's mouth. The launches all anchored in a line abreast, each with her rowing boat hanging astern of her. These boats were all placed under the orders of a lieutenant of the flag-ship; the two named for this service were, Brenton,\* the third, and Mellish, the fourth, lieutenant. These officers had charge of the boats each alternate night, and were to be held responsible for whatever might happen.

It was the custom of these officers to anchor their boats so near the batteries, that the voices of the British seamen singing their songs to pass the night away were distinctly heard by the Spanish sentinels; and the Spaniards considered themselves insulted under the muz-

\* Now the lieutenant-governor of Greenwich Hospital.



zles of their guns by a foe whom it was in their power to destroy by a single discharge of grape. It was, indeed, only by the positive orders of the general that they were prevented firing on these daring intruders. The Spanish admiral sent off a flag of truce to Lord St. Vincent, stating these circumstances, and, like a noble Spaniard, expressing his reluctance to fire on an enemy so completely in his power. Lord St. Vincent sent for Mr. Brenton, whose night it was to command, and said to him, "Don't let your people sing, but don't increase your distance from the batteries."

Shortly before day it was the custom for the officer in command, who was always in the centre of the line, to pass the word right and left for the boats to weigh their grapnels, and return to their ships, about three leagues off; convinced that no frigate would attempt to leave the harbour so near the dawn of day, in face of our fleet.

It so happened, however, that, on the morning of the day alluded to in Sir John Orde's letter (the 14th July), Mr. Brenton commanded the boats, and gave the usual orders; and having cast off the barge from the stern of his launch, and seeing all the other boats getting under weigh, he hoisted his sail, gave orders to

the coxswain how to steer, and was preparing himself to take a nap. But his repose was very short. He was awakened by a large shot passing over his boat, and, looking round, he saw a division of gun-boats from Cadiz taking possession of the Prince George's launch, which he was surprised to find still at her grapnel. He immediately hailed the boats right and left of him, and desired them to pull round upon the enemy, and get their carronades clear for action. At the same time, he set the example in his own boat, which was immediately followed by those around him, only six in number. The others were out of the reach of voice, and he had no signals by which they might be recalled. Those who supported the Ville de Paris launch soon got into action, but were too late to rescue the St. George's launch, which the enemy had got into their possession. Two boats, both belonging to one ship, did not pull in to assist the others, although positively and verbally ordered to do so. The consequence was, that the enemy being reinforced by a fresh division of boats out of Cadiz, Lieutenant Brenton was compelled to retreat, being completely overpowered, and having several of his men killed and wounded, and his launch disabled. When he got on board the Ville de Paris, he explained

to the admiral the reason he had not been supported by the greater number of boats, which were too far advanced on their way to their ships, and he had no means of recalling them.

Upon this his lordship gave out a general order, to the effect that the service upon which the guard boats were employed being of the utmost importance, he recommended that the captains of the ships under his command should send no officer upon that duty but such as were of *approved firmness* ; that, in the event of any officer distinguishing himself, he should be promoted without any reference to the ship he might belong to, or to his seniority ; thus putting the whole of the officers upon the same footing as those of the commander-in-chief's ship.

On this order being given out, Sir John Orde sent the two lieutenants of the Princess Royal, his own flag-ship, who had disobeyed the verbal order, on board the Ville de Paris, with an official letter from themselves, demanding to be tried by a court-martial. This Lord St. Vincent refused to grant ; tore the letter in two on the quarter-deck ; and added the homely adage, " Gentlemen, the more you stir," &c.

Sir John Orde, ill-advisedly as I think, resolved to espouse the cause of these two officers, who

had never been reflected on by name ; and, by so doing, he got *them* into complete disgrace, and involved himself in a quarrel, which embittered the remainder of his life.

The capture of the Prince George's launch was attributable to a practical joke of some young midshipmen, who were in the boats astern of her, and who, finding that every one in the launch, including the lieutenant, was fast asleep, and did not hear the order given to weigh, they resolved to slip their paynter, and leave the launch to herself. This unlucky joke ended in the capture of the boat, the disgrace of her officer and of the British flag, and the loss of some valuable lives.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Mutiny on board the *Princess Royal* — Character, trial, and execution of the mutineers — Reflections — Anecdotes with reference to the above — The signal for all chaplains — The Admiral's manner of passing a sleepless night — His visit to the quarter-deck — Order to block up the entering port — Consequences — Anecdote of Tucker — of Darby — of Coffin — of Downman — Lord St. Vincent fond of taking charge of the watch — The mutiny on board the *Romulus* — The manner of treating the crew — Reply to the captain of a frigate — Letter to the Board of Ordnance on saluting and exercise — Letter to Sir J. Brenton on boarding vessels on neutral convoys.

I SHALL now proceed to speak of the mutiny on board the *Princess Royal*, in the month of July, 1797. That ship bore the flag of Sir John Orde, and was lying with the fleet before Cadiz, into which port it was intended to carry the ship. The plan of operations was revealed to the chaplain in the middle watch, and it was to have been carried into effect at four in the morning. The marines were immediately called out, the ringleaders seized, and sent to the *Ville de Paris*. One of them pretended to be an idiot, and had so far succeeded in deceiving

the officers, that he was not put in irons like the rest, but merely placed under the charge of the centinel at the cabin-door, where his apparently insane and unmeaning gestures excited the mirth of all but Lord St. Vincent, who immediately read him through and through, and said to him, "I am very much mistaken, if you are not the greatest villain of the whole." The man kept up his disguise until the trial, and even before the court; but when, in the course of the investigation, some startling facts were elicited, three of the prisoners fell down on their knees and implored for mercy. From that moment the seeming madman shook off all dissimulation, and, resuming his true character, astonished the court with his animated countenance, and keenly reproached his accomplices for their meanness and pusillanimity. "For shame!" he said: "is this the way you give yourselves up?" and then addressing the president, he said, "Sir, I wish to cross-examine that witness." This he did with the greatest ability, and the most remarkable acuteness of observation. In fact, he proved himself to be a man of superior talent and education, and fully bore out the observations of Mr. Pitt, before referred to, he having been selected from among the rebellious Irish to enter as a volun-

teer into the navy, in order to sow the seeds of rebellion and mutiny in the fleet, or in any regiment to which he might gain access.

The ringleaders tried on this occasion were all found guilty, and executed. There was a circumstance happened on the morning of the execution, which, as it exhibits a strong trait of character, ought to be related. My brother, Sir Jahleel Brenton, was the officer selected to superintend and see the sentence of the court-martial carried into execution. The admiral sent for him. His lordship was in his dressing-gown, and was about to shave himself. He gave the officer the most distinct orders as to every part of his conduct, even to the most minute particulars, and, having done so, dismissed him, shut the cabin-door, and proceeded with his toilet. My brother feared he had misunderstood his lordship in one particular point, and went back to make himself perfectly certain. "Excuse me, my lord," he said, "for returning to you, but I was not quite certain whether I had understood you rightly in regard to one part of my instructions." The admiral, turning his head suddenly round, gave himself a severe cut with his razor. The blood flowed copiously, and my brother began to apologize. "No apology is necessary, sir,"

said the admiral; "the duty you are engaged in is too important to be trifled with, and I never should have forgiven you if you had made any mistake."

These mutinies in the service are subjects revolting to my nature, and I dwell on them from a sense of duty alone. When I reflect that all the horrible scenes which occurred at the period in question might have been avoided, and that similar ones may be avoided in future, by giving a proper education and training to every young person intended for the sea-service generally, with a liberal remuneration to all, it seems to me that the blood of these unhappy men rests, in a great measure, on our own heads. I still hope to see the day, or, if I do not, that my successors will, when the only punishment in the navy will be expulsion.

The unhappy occurrences just related had interrupted that zeal, harmony, and good-humoured confidence, which, till then, had mutually prevailed among all ranks in the fleet. Still the gallant chief, although imperiously called upon to exercise severity, was on every occasion eager to extend mercy, when he could do it with safety to the state. I will here relate a few characteristic anecdotes. On one occasion, he found a sailor lying drunk in the



streets at Gibraltar, and endeavoured very good-humouredly to rouse him.

“What ship do you belong to, sailor?” said the admiral.

“What’s that to you?” replied the tar, without raising his eyes to see who it was that addressed him.

“Come, get up, and go on board your ship.”

“No, I shan’t; for, if I goes on board drunk, that old rascal will hang me.”

“What old rascal do you mean?” said the admiral.

“Why, old Jack, to be sure.”

Lord St. Vincent well knew that this was his sobriquet in the fleet, and he went away, highly amused, giving orders that the poor sailor should be taken care of.

One Sunday, after divine service had been performed, whether or not his lordship thought the good Dr. Morgan wanted brightening up, and that he had too little to do, I cannot say, but he called Mr. Moore, the signal lieutenant, and inquired of him whether there was such a thing as a black flag on board.

“No, my lord,” said the officer, “but we have a black and white one.”

“That will do, sir: make the signal for all lieutenants.”

The signal was at the mast-head in an instant, and an order given, that whenever the black and white flag was displayed, with a red pendant over it, it was the signal for all chaplains. What followed was, I think, what the French call *un peu malin*. A few days after "it blew great guns," says my authority, from the west-south-west, which is directly into the Bay of Cadiz, so well known since by the battle of Trafalgar. The in-shore squadron lay six miles from the flag-ship, directly to leeward, and up went the signal for all chaplains. It was a hard pull for the rowers, and no luxury for the sitters. When they reached the quarter-deck of the *Ville de Paris*, literally drenched with salt-water, the admiral presented them to "Bishop Morgan," as he called his chaplain, and desired that they would go down into the ward-room and hold a conclave.

I am afraid this "freshener" for the chaplains cost Dr. Morgan half-a-dozen of sherry, to repel the humidity, and I do not think any thing was gained by it in the cause of religion or virtue.

Lord St. Vincent, during his anxious command, passed many sleepless hours in the night, and generally arose between two and three o'clock in the morning; his usual hour of re-

tiring at that time being eight o'clock, P. M. One night, feeling very restless, he rang his bell, and ordered the officer of the watch to his bed-side. The officer was Lieutenant Cashman, a fine rough unlettered sailor, of the true breed. "What sort of a night, sir?" "A very fine night, my lord." "Nothing stirring? no strangers in sight?" "No, my lord." "Nothing to do on deck?" "No, my lord." "Then you may take a book, and read to me."

Cashman would rather have been in the boat with the chaplains; but there was no possible way of escape. "What book shall I read, my lord?" "Oh! any book—it don't signify—take the Admiralty Statutes." Cashman handed out the huge quarto, and having placed the lantern with which he was furnished to visit the ship, on the table before him, sat down in his watch-coat, and read a part of those acts of parliament, out of which our naval code is formed—acts which I will venture to say he never heard of before, and, I am sure, never looked at again.

Lord St. Vincent, in telling the story, used to say, "Sir, I thought I should have suffocated myself, I was forced to keep my head so long under the bed-clothes, to conceal my laughter

at the manner in which he stumbled and hobbled through his task ;” and well he might, with a horn lantern and a farthing candle.

He sometimes amused himself in paying a visit to the quarter-deck, at what most people would deem very unseasonable hours. Coming up one morning at half-past two, or what is called the middle watch, he sent for Colonel Flight, the commanding officer of marines. Up came the colonel, armed at all points, supposing that some enterprize was in hand. “ I have sent for you,” said the chief, in that quiet and gentlemanly style which he could always command, “ I have sent for you, colonel, that you might smell, for the first time in your life, the delicious odours brought off from the shores of Andalusia by the land-wind. Now, take a good sniff, and then you may go and turn in again.”

A lieutenant one day came on board to answer a signal. Lord St. Vincent thought there was about him too much *embonpoint* for an officer of that rank. “ Calder,” said he, to his captain of the fleet, “ all the lieutenants are running to belly ; they have been too long at anchor (for the fleet was still off Cadiz) ; block up the entering port, except for admirals and captains, and make them climb over the hammocks.”

I must acquaint my unprofessional readers, that the entering port in a three-decked ship is on the middle-deck, or second tier of guns from the water, and that the difference between going into that, and climbing over the hammocks, may be compared to entering the drawing-room at the balcony window, or mounting up to the parapet, and taking the attics by storm. There was also a great inconvenience, and even expence, attending this painful operation, namely, that, whereas in those days all officers wore white knee-breeches, or shorts, as they were called, the consequence was, that many useful garments, which could not so readily be replaced, were torn and spoiled in this attempt at juvenile activity; and I am also much disposed to believe, that many oaths were sworn by the young and thoughtless men, which, but for this needless exertion, would probably never have been elicited.

The admiral was at times disposed to be jocular, and even on serious subjects. A lieutenant had incurred his displeasure, and he appointed him to the command of a gun-boat, which he kept at Gibraltar in terrorem. "I have appointed you, sir, to the command of the Caco-fogo. Now, go, sir,

‘ And pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon.’ ”

There was no one who knew Lord St. Vincent so well, or could do so much with him, as the late Benjamin Tucker, of Trematon Castle. Tucker was a talented man, had received a good education, and was brought up in the navy as a purser. Lord St. Vincent found him out, and made him his secretary. Having, on one occasion, given him a letter of four pages to copy, he asked him, before he had had it as many minutes, whether he had done it. Tucker made him no answer, but turned his intelligent black eyes on him. "Now," said Lord St. Vincent, "I understand you perfectly: that look is as much as to say, you old fool, how can you expect me to write a page in a minute?"

Darby, in the *Bellerophon*, was much wanted to be ready for sea, and Lord St. Vincent had said that he should go, ready or not ready. Darby was told this, and said he would *not* go until he was perfectly prepared. Lord St. Vincent having heard of this, met him the next day in the dock-yard at Gibraltar.

"Darby," said the admiral, "I have been dreaming about you."

"Have you, my lord? You did me great honour."

"Yes, Darby: I dreamt that I wanted you

to go to sea, and that you said you would not go, and that I would not believe it."

"I understand you, my lord," said the captain: "I am ready for sea."

When Sir Isaac Coffin was commissioner of the dock-yard at Lisbon, he often wrote to Lord St. Vincent, then off Cadiz, expressing a great desire to see the enemy's fleet in that part. The admiral, knowing that he was of more use on his post than he could be off Cadiz, turned a deaf ear to his applications; but at length Downman, the present vice-admiral, who then commanded the little Speedy brig, offered him a passage from Lisbon to the fleet, and Coffin made his bow to the admiral on board the *Ville de Paris*. He was hospitably entertained, dined, and drank tea, and at eight o'clock Lord St. Vincent said to him: "Coffin, there is your cot on the larboard side of the cabin. You had better turn in. I always go to bed at eight o'clock, that I may rise early, and, as I have much to say to you, you must follow my example; for, I warn you, that I shall have you up very early, to send you in-shore, to look at the Spanish fleet in Cadiz, which, I know, is the great object of your visit to me."

Coffin affected to be pleased with the ar-

rangement, and went very quietly, though very unwillingly, to bed, but not to sleep, for the admiral kept him in constant conversation till half-past twelve, when he rang his bell for the officer of the watch.

“Hoist out the barge, sir, and man her for the commissioner; he is going away to the in-shore squadron, and wishes to be there by day-break, to see the Spanish fleet in Cadiz.”

There was no remedy, and no remonstrance. The boat was out, manned, and ready, before Coffin had got his boots from the custody of the shiner.

“Mind, we shall see you at breakfast, Coffin,” said the admiral, as the commissioner left the cabin.

“Ay, ay, my lord,” said Coffin, and away he went to the in-shore squadron; while the admiral, with a smile of self-complacency, such as I have seen him express, composed himself to sleep. Coffin satisfied his curiosity, and obeyed the invitation to breakfast, with great punctuality, at eight o’clock, and at half-past eight the officer of the watch was again summoned.

“Man the barge, sir: the commissioner is going away. Good bye, Coffin; happy to see you, if you come this way again.”



“ Thank you, my lord,” said Coffin, and took his leave, to enjoy that rest on board the little Speedy, which was not to be obtained in the Ville de Paris.\*

It was on the occasion of Downman’s joining the fleet, with Coffin, that the earl said, “ Downman, you will dine with me to-day.”

“ Thank you, my lord. Shall I go on board, and anchor the brig?”

“ What!” said the admiral, “ anchor that hooker?—no, by no means. Poop, there! throw the end of the main-brace over the stern, for the Speedy to hold on by.” And, having taken up this idea, he actually adhered to it, and kept the brig hanging astern of the Ville de Paris all night. In the middle watch she thrust her jib-boom into the admiral’s cabin-windows; when, still determined to treat her as a boat, he hailed her, desired they would get their sweeps out, and back her astern!

His lordship was very fond of taking charge

\* In relating this little anecdote, I hope the gallant admiral will forgive me if I remind him, that he once played me a much worse trick, when I was lieutenant of the Theseus, at Sheerness, in 1801, and he commissioner there. He invited me to dine with him, observing, that he was “ a great friend of my father’s.” I accepted the invitation; and, after pulling on shore, in half a gale of wind, in the ship’s jolly-boat, head to wind for a good hour, I found that “ *my father’s friend* ” had gone to town on duty, and had quite forgotten, or omitted, the necessary precaution of ordering any dinner for me!

of the deck, as officer of the watch. As soon as he heard the wardroom drum beat "the roast beef of old England," he would go on the quarter-deck, and, after taking a turn or two, he would say to the lieutenant, "Why don't you go to your dinner, sir?"

"Nobody to relieve me, my lord." This was sometimes the case, when many officers were away on duty.

"I will relieve you, sir;" and down ran the officer. Presently a seaman or a marine would come up, and look sharply round.

"Who are you looking for?" the admiral would roar out.

"For the officer of the watch, my lord."

"I am the officer of the watch; now, what do you want?"

"Nothing, my lord;" and away the poor fellow would run. They could tell their little complaint to the lieutenant, but had not confidence enough to speak to the admiral in person.

When the mutiny took place on board the *Romulus*, of 32 guns, the object of the mutineers was, that the ship should be sent to England. Lord St. Vincent, while he did not overlook the fault, or pardon the guilty, said that she should go to England, and she was ordered to Lisbon for that purpose, but, on her arrival

there, the whole of her crew were separated, and drafted into different ships ; after which she was fitted up by a sort of subscription from the fleet, and certainly not of the best men, but generally such as were worn out, and required retirement on shore. She was then sent home to be paid off.

The spirit of mutiny was now on the decline, and might be said to be out of fashion. Lord St. Vincent, by his union of firmness and conciliation, together with constant occupation, as he said, to keep the devil out of their minds, had got his fleet into such order, that it might be said to have set the brightest example to the British navy ; and I have reason to believe it was looked up to as a model, in these respects, in every part of the world.

The captain of a frigate at Gibraltar complained to Lord St. Vincent, that the governor of the garrison had withdrawn some soldiers who were serving in his ship as marines. His lordship replied, " I should have had a better opinion of you if you had not sent me a crying letter. There are men enough to be got at Gibraltar, and you and your officers would have been much better employed in picking them up, than lying on your backs, and roaring like so many bull calves."

The admiral wrote a strong remonstrance to the Board of Ordnance, on their having stopped the accounts of a captain, for firing a salute by order of the commander-in-chief. This was an old grievance in the navy, a piece of false economy in the government, which would never allow sufficient powder, either for saluting or for exercise. It must be obvious, in every point of view, that this parsimony is fraught with the very worst consequences: first, that powder loses its virtue by being too long kept; secondly, that the oftener the guns are discharged and reloaded the better, because they are more ready for action, and run less risk of missing fire; and, thirdly, because the exercise of the great guns was never perfect or effectual, without a liberal allowance of powder. His lordship's representation produced the desired effect.

My brother, Sir Jahleel Brenton, when he commanded the *Speedy*, fell in with a Portuguese 74, with a rear-admiral's flag, and having a convoy of merchant vessels under his protection—among others, one known to the captain to be a Spaniard; and, regardless of the escort, he was just going to pounce upon her, when the Portuguese admiral interposed; and, as he followed them over the bar of Lisbon, the Spaniard

hoisted his national colours. This was a little too bad, and the captain represented the facts to Lord St. Vincent, from whom he received the following sensible advice:—

Sir,

I admire your zeal, but recommend forbearance upon the subject of taking vessels out of neutral convoys; as any breach which such a measure might occasion between the two nations might draw upon you the censure of the Admiralty, and probably a temporary deprivation of command.

ST. VINCENT.

## CHAPTER XV.

*Affair of Sir John Orde, with letters to Lord Spencer and Sir Evan Nepean, having reference to that subject.*

THE dispute between the Earl of St. Vincent and Sir John Orde originated as stated in the last chapter. I shall enter no more into the merits of the case than is absolutely just to either party; but, inasmuch as a right understanding of the official duties of our profession is essentially necessary to the carrying on the service, I shall give the most important facts which have come to my knowledge.

Sir John Orde, soon after his return to England from the blockade of Cadiz, where he had been employed, under the command of the Earl of St. Vincent, printed a series of letters and remarks, which he called "a Copy of Correspondence," &c. This pamphlet was never published, but privately circulated; an act in itself quite unjustifiable, favouring as it did only one side of the question, and depriving the public,

and the parties concerned, of all fair means of appeal.\*

Sir John, in the early part of this defence of his character, sets out with the following observations:—

“ It has been conceived, and generally credited, notwithstanding the pains taken to set the matter right in public opinion, through the medium of friends and private information, that the appointment of Sir Horatio Nelson to the command of a squadron, detached for particular service in the Mediterranean, had alone created a difference and disagreement between Sir John Orde and the commander-in-chief of the station; which, after leading to the removal of the former by the latter (officer), occasioned his demand of a court-martial upon Lord St. Vincent; and, on the refusal of the Admiralty to grant it, his call upon the noble lord for personal satisfaction.

“ It has also been supposed, and generally credited, that Sir John Orde had, without reason, refused a very satisfactory proposal for *chief* command, made to him by the first lord of the Admiralty, and, consequently, that his complaint of grievance, and injurious treat-

\* I speak feelingly on this subject, having experienced the same treatment from the late Admiral Griffiths Colpoys.

ment, was wholly ill-founded and unjustifiable."

Without meaning any disrespect to the memory of Sir John Orde, I am bound to say, that the two foregoing propositions are substantially true, as will be made clear from his own showing. The first is completely established by his letter to Lord Spencer, dated June 16, 1798; and the second by another letter, which he acknowledges to have written to Lord Spencer, declining an offer to hoist his flag in the Channel fleet. It is true, he was not offered the *chief* command; but the offer of hoisting his flag in the *Neptune* or the *Foudroyant*, the choice being left, at his own option, of the finest ships in the service, with every probability of succeeding to the chief command, should, one would think, have induced an officer of his rank and enterprize to have overlooked any little matter of private feeling, for the sake of again embarking among his brother officers in the glorious cause of his country, at a time too when it was menaced with dangers of unparalleled magnitude; all Europe being, as it were, combined against us, and the most alarming discontents, and actual rebellion, existing in some parts of the empire. Under these circumstances, to decline service on the score of private feeling, was



justly visited by Lord Spencer as an act amounting, if not to disloyalty, at least to a display of selfishness, at a time when every sentiment should have been absorbed in the good of his country.

It appears that some trifling misunderstanding had arisen previously to the nomination of Nelson to the command of the Nile expedition, owing to a general rule of service which Lord St. Vincent had laid down, to the effect, that he should always look to the captain of a junior flag-ship, when under his immediate orders, for her discipline and regularity. This, Sir John thought, was setting his own authority entirely aside; but I rather suspect he misunderstood the wording of Lord St. Vincent's letter. The Earl denied that such was his meaning. But we must proceed.

As soon as it was known that Nelson had obtained the command of the detachment sent up to Toulon, that Troubridge was to join him with ten sail of the line, and that Sir Roger Curtis had, with his squadron, formed a junction with Lord St. Vincent off Cadiz, and become second in command over Sir John Orde, the latter, giving vent to anger, which I feel very certain was stimulated by others, addressed the following letter to Earl Spencer, then first lord of the Admiralty:—

Princess Royal, off Cadiz, June 16, 1798.

My Lord,

Sir Horatio Nelson, a junior officer to me, just arrived from England, is detached from the fleet in which we serve, up the Mediterranean, with the command of twelve sail of the line, some frigates, &c. ; and Sir Roger Curtis has joined Lord St. Vincent, and taken the command in the second post, thereby lowering me to the fourth. I must not say I am surprised at this treatment, although very different from what I hoped to have experienced ; but I cannot conceal from your lordship how much I feel hurt at the former, in particular. Indeed, were I insensible to it, I should be unworthy the rank I hold, and the distinction I have fought for, and endeavoured to merit.

After having been employed the greatest part of last winter in the command of a strong squadron, a station honourable and confidential, in which I acquitted myself successfully, and I have reason to believe entirely satisfactory to the commander-in-chief, I little expected to have been placed at this moment in the situation in which I now stand, so truly mortifying to an officer of any feeling or pretensions. I will not, however, on this occasion trouble your lordship with a recapitulation of the claims I conceive I have to a better lot than is now as-

signed to me ; nor will I remind your lordship of the grounds on which I offered myself for service, and was accepted, on my return from a very troublesome service at Plymouth, when the mutiny broke out at the Nore ; as both must be fresh in your lordship's recollection. I have felt from my earliest youth the debt I owe, as an individual, to my country, and have endeavoured faithfully to discharge it, by the sacrifice of my best days to the duties of my profession, in any climate and country to which I was required to go. The same principles, and the most disinterested motives, will lead me to persevere in a similar line of conduct, so long as my services continue to be called for, my health will permit, and my character as an officer and a gentleman will suffer me to do.

I have the honour to be, &c.

J. ORDE.

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A copy of this letter having been transmitted by the writer to Lord St. Vincent, the following answer was immediately returned :—

*To Rear-Admiral Sir John Orde.*

Ville de Paris, June 18, 1798.

Dear Sir,

The letter you have done me the honour to communicate, which I enclose, expresses pre-

cisely what I should have done under similar circumstances, for I never was blest with *prudence* and *forbearance*. At the same time, it must be acknowledged, that those who are responsible for measures have an undoubted right to appoint the men they prefer to carry them into execution. You have a just claim to my entire approbation of your persevering services during the winter blockade of Cadiz.

Your's very sincerely,

ST. VINCENT.

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The above letters contain the whole and true origin of the unhappy difference between these two highly respected and gallant officers. It is easy to perceive that a quarrel was growing up, the ostensible cause of which was Nelson's appointment; but the jealousy of other officers was roused on more trivial matters, and Lord St. Vincent fancied he had a mutiny among his captains as well as among his men. This is pretty evident from the tenor of his letters; and we must admit, that whether his suspicions were well or ill-founded, he had a difficult game to play. That he was harsh, and sometimes hasty in his judgment, I freely admit; but a great allowance must be made for a commander-in-chief of a British fleet at such a time,

with such awful responsibility. Men under such circumstances will not be reasoned with, even when they know they are in error. This was particularly the case on one occasion, immediately following this unlucky expostulation. Lieutenant-Colonel Desborough, of the marines, had addressed a letter on service to Lord St. Vincent. His lordship supposing (I cannot explain how the impression originated) that it had come from Sir John Orde, wrote an answer to the rear-admiral in a very high and peremptory style. Sir John remonstrated, declaring he had never written any such letter. Lord St. Vincent was made sensible of his error, and begged pardon of the rear-admiral on the quarter-deck. Here, in common respect, as well as a sense of duty, the affair should have ended. But Sir John renewed the subject; when Lord St. Vincent interrupted him, saying, "Sir John Orde, I have begged your pardon—I can hear no more—no explanation or discussion." Then, turning on his heel, he went below, leaving Sir John Orde "in astonishment and pity."—(Correspondence, p. 21).

Sir John Orde, having obtained from the commander-in-chief, on his own quarter-deck, an acknowledgment of his error, had gained his point, and it was all he could expect, or should

have desired. Had he wished his lordship a good morning, and gone on board of his own ship, it is most probable that the subsequent unhappy dispute would not have occurred: but the wound once given was incurable; each party took a dislike to the other; and an accident, or rather a misfortune of a serious nature, blew the latent embers of discord into a flame, which lasted during the lives of the parties.

The following is the general order referred to, as having been issued by Lord St. Vincent on the capture of the St. George's launch:—

Ville de Paris, off Cadiz, 14th July, 1798.

It is very painful to the commander-in-chief to have to pass public censure on many of the officers who commanded boats of the fleet this morning, by whose misconduct a brilliant *coup* has been missed, and disgrace brought on his Majesty's arms. In future the lieutenants for this duty are to be selected, and none but officers of approved firmness employed, who will be sure of their reward for any successful enterprise they exhibit.

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Sir John Orde, conceiving that two of his lieutenants, Duffey and Nowell, who had been in the boats that morning, were reflected on,

sent them on board the *Ville de Paris*, with his compliments to Lord St. Vincent, desiring to know if the officers in the *Princess Royal's* boats had conducted themselves ill; but they returned with a very unsatisfactory answer. Sir John defended his officers, and demanded a court-martial on them. This was refused. A long correspondence, or rather long letters of remonstrance and complaint, were addressed by Sir John to the commander-in-chief, who either took no notice of them, or returned very laconic answers. In reply to a very long one (*Correspondence*, p. 36), and marked "private," Lord St. Vincent returned the following answer, also marked "private:"—

*Ville de Paris*, off Cadiz, 31st July, 1798.

Sir,

The moment you communicated to me the letter you sent to Lord Spencer, I considered it impossible you could remain an hour longer in this fleet than was necessary to make other arrangements, and I did not choose to leave it to the Admiralty who should be sent to me. Sir William Parker, to whom I communicated the letter I received from Lord Spencer, touching the employment of Sir Horatio Nelson, knows that I had no share in the transaction. I cer-

tainly feel myself under no sort of engagement to you, under the quotation of what I admit to have passed in the presence of the persons you mentioned, at the same time that I shall be glad of any opportunity to bear testimony to your merits as an officer.

I am, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

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The next day his lordship addressed a supplementary note to Sir John Orde, marked "private." It is as follows :—

Ville de Paris, 1st August, 1798.

Sir,

Under the anxious desire I felt to give a prompt answer to your letter of yesterday, I omitted to mention, that had you attended to the earnest wish I expressed, that you should not remonstrate against the measure of putting the detached squadron under the orders of Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson, you must eventually have succeeded to the command of this fleet, for my health will not admit of my continuing in the command of it many months longer.

I am, &c.

ST. VINCENT.



Having given the letter of Sir John Orde to Lord Spencer, I shall insert the answer also, as being highly honourable both to the writer and the receiver:—

*To Rear-Admiral Sir John Orde, Bart.*

Admiralty, July 18, 1798.

Sir,

On the 5th instant I received your letter of the 16th June, and am sorry to find any event has happened to make you feel less comfortable in the situation in which you are placed, than it is my wish every officer should feel, as far as circumstances will allow of it. With regard to the first object of dissatisfaction to which your letter alludes, viz., the detachment of Sir Horatio Nelson, I cannot say that it strikes me in the same light it does you; nor can I conceive why it should not appear natural that a younger rear-admiral, in a two-decked ship, lately come out of dock, should be sent with two sail of the line on a service of that nature; and, having been so sent, that it was not judged expedient, when circumstances made it necessary to reinforce him, to send an officer senior to him, especially as his seniors were all in ships less calculated for detached service. As to the arrival of Sir Roger Curtis, the very peculiar

circumstances under which that squadron was detached from home sufficiently point out that it was a matter of necessity, and not of any arrangement calculated to displace you from a station in which your conduct had been approved by the commander-in-chief. Undoubtedly nothing but that kind of necessity would have occasioned such a measure. But I will dwell no longer on these points, because, though I felt it due to you, and incumbent on me, to touch upon them, as you had thought fit to notice them in a letter to me, I have more satisfaction in acknowledging the handsome manner in which your sentiments, respecting the service of your country at this period, are expressed. Continuing to act on that principle, you cannot fail to deserve all the credit which is due to a zealous and active officer, and all the satisfaction that must infallibly attend a consciousness that you are performing your duty to the public.

I am, with great truth,

SPENCER.

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Lord St. Vincent having determined to order Sir John Orde to England, sent him a verbal message to that effect by Captain Draper, of

the Princess Royal, at the same time desiring Sir John to send two of his midshipmen on board the *Ville de Paris*, in order that they might be promoted. His lordship soon after addressed a note to Captain Draper, repeating the demand for the names of the two midshipmen, in order that their commissions might be made out. To this letter Sir John Orde desired Captain Draper to reply, that he declined naming any. This certainly was highly disrespectful to the commander-in-chief, and cruel to the young officers. Thus things went from bad to worse; conversations at table were reported from one to the other; and Sir John asserts, that Lord St. Vincent swore, by G—, that he would stay no longer on the station, in consequence of what his lordship seemed to think improper sentences of a court-martial. This may, for aught I know, have been the case. I can only say, that I never heard Lord St. Vincent use such an expression. It would be useless to follow out all the bickerings, and sharp letters of crimination and defence, written by either party, which Lord St. Vincent called “fending and proving;” and, desirous to put a stop to it, he sent Sir John an order to strike his flag on board the *Princess Royal*, of 98 guns, and to hoist it on board the *Blenheim*, of

90 guns, in order to return to England. On the same day on which Sir John received this order, viz., 29th August, 1798, he addressed a letter to the secretary of the Admiralty, requesting that a court-martial might be ordered on the Earl of St. Vincent, for having, in his, Sir John's opinion, acted unbecoming the character of an officer, by treating him in a manner unsuitable to his rank, between the 17th May and 29th August, 1798. Lord St. Vincent, knowing the contents of the letter, forwarded it to the Admiralty. On the 31st August, Sir John addressed a strong letter of remonstrance to Lord St. Vincent, on the manner in which he had been treated by him, and calling in question the necessity of removing him into the *Blenheim* (Correspondence, p. 71); to which the earl replied as follows:—

*To Rear-Admiral Sir John Orde, Bart.*

Sir, Ville de Paris, off Cadiz, September 6, 1798.

I have to acknowledge your letter, dated off Cadiz, 31st August, expressed in terms of insubordination, that even in these times I did not conceive could have come from an officer of your rank.

I am, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

When Sir John Orde arrived in the Downs, he received an answer to his application for a court-martial. It was dated Admiralty, 18th October, 1798, and after recapitulating the substance of Sir John's letter, ended with a refusal to comply with the demand. In November following it was officially communicated to Sir John by the secretary of the Admiralty, Mr. Nepean, that their lordships did not consider the reasons assigned by Earl St. Vincent for sending him to England were sufficient to justify that measure, and that, having signified the same to his lordship, they did not think it necessary to take any farther steps on the occasion.—(Correspondence, p. 87).

Here was another resting place for Sir John Orde, if he had chosen to have availed himself of it; but he was not satisfied, either with this kind intimation, or with one of the same date, in which he was commanded "to strike his flag on board the *Blenheim* and come on shore. Their lordships have, however, directed me to apprise you, that they intend shortly to appoint some other ship for its reception."

Very shortly after the receipt of these letters, Lord Spencer sent for Sir John Orde, and told him it was his intention to employ him in the Channel fleet, and that he might choose either

the Neptune or the Foudroyant for his flagship. These friendly and soothing offers being declined, can we be surprised at the result? A short time after, when some foreign commands were disposed of, Sir John saw Lord Spencer, who told him that, "as he had refused the service proposed to him, he did not choose to give him any other."

On Lord St. Vincent's return to England, in the Argo, of 44 guns, in the year 1799, Sir John Orde determined to demand "*private* satisfaction for private ill-treatment" (Correspondence, p. 90); but the meeting was deferred in consequence of Lord St. Vincent's continued ill health. At length, hearing that his lordship had completely recovered, Sir John Orde set off for Brentwood, in pursuit of his plan. On his arrival there he sent Captain Walrond to Rochetts, distant about two miles, for the purpose of requesting a meeting. This Lord St. Vincent by letter declined, on the grounds of not being personally responsible for his public measures, and from actual indisposition. Sir John returned to town, and intended waiting events at Dorant's Hotel, where he was shortly afterwards called upon by the civil magistrate, Sir Richard Ford, to give security for keeping the peace. Lord St. Vincent was also bound in

the same manner, both of them in very high sums.

While Sir John Orde was at Bognor, he received the following official communication from the Admiralty, dated 9th October, 1799:—

Sir,

I have the commands of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to send, for your information, the enclosed copy of a letter which I have this day written to Admiral the Earl of St. Vincent.

*To the Rt. Hon. the Earl of St. Vincent, K.B., &c.*

Admiralty Office, 9th October, 1799.

My Lord,

The Earl Spencer having acquainted my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that the King had received information that a challenge had been sent to your lordship by Rear-Admiral Sir John Orde, on the occasion of some transactions that had taken place while he was employed under your lordship's orders, during your command of his Majesty's fleet in the Mediterranean; and having, at the same time, informed their lordships, that his Majesty had been pleased to signify his express commands, that your lordship should be restrained from accepting any challenge from Sir John Orde, on

pain of his Majesty's displeasure: I have their lordships' commands to signify the same to your lordship; and to add, that their lordships expect you will pay due obedience to their commands on this head.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) EVAN NEPEAN.

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The letters which follow in this chapter have more or less a reference to this unfortunate dispute.

*To Evan Nepean, Esq.*

Gibraltar, 6th December, 1798.

My dear Nepean,

I thank you kindly for putting Mr. Pitt in possession of the facts relative to certain transactions, which have been most basely misrepresented. Sir Wm. P. and Sir J. O. will not deny that I used every argument in my power to prevent their writing to Lord Spender. When I found the former had been wrought upon in a manner that I could make no impression on, I endeavoured to persuade him to delay his letter, which I was equally unsuccessful in; and I then told him, he was at full liberty to lay on upon me, as hard as he chose. Soon after this he



sent me the letter to read, which bore no mark of the character of an officer or a gentleman. I returned it without a remark; and, when sealed, it was forwarded in my packet. In respect to Sir J. O., I did not know he had written until some time after his letter went, when he showed me a copy, which I told him was what I should not have been ashamed to have written myself, had I felt as he did, or words to that effect. I dare say he took them down, for I have discovered, since he left the fleet, that he is fraught with the most malignant policy.

Formed as your Board is, I am not surprised at the letter you were ordered to write, which I would not endure for one moment, but for the critical state of naval operations in these seas, which would suffer in the extreme, were I to avail myself of the permission I have obtained to return to England, for the re-establishment of my health. But I confess myself not christian enough either to forget or forgive those who have most unjustly condemned me, unheard. Much fitter would it have been to put me on my trial.

Your's, most truly,  
ST. VINCENT.

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*To Earl Spencer.*

Gibraltar, 6th December, 1798.

My Lord,

The recollections of what passed at Cadiz made me very circumspect in the choice of a colleague to General Stuart. Neither Sir —— nor Rear-Admiral —— would have done. I knew Commodore Duckworth to possess a large share of forbearance, which he acquired under the high hand of Captain Fielding, and the enclosed will justify my appointing him to the command. The general has many great and good points about him, but he is a niggard in his praise to the navy, and there are very few seamen who could act with him. I am about to send the regiment De Rolle to Minorca, at his earnest request.

I have the honour to be, my Lord, &amp;c.

ST. VINCENT.

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*To Evan Nepean, Esq.*

Le Souverain, Gibraltar, 28th December, 1798.

Sir,

I observe, that in the close of your letter of the 2d ultimo, wherein you communicate the permission given me, by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, to return to England,

leaving the command of the fleet in the Mediterranean, &c., to the next flag-officer in succession, and that I am not to avail myself of this indulgence, unless my health absolutely requires it; which not being the case at present, I shall conform myself to the pleasure of their lordships, until a return of the complaint I am subject to compels me to relinquish the command, when, I conclude, I am at liberty to go to Spithead, in the Ville de Paris.

I am, Sir, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

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*To Evan Nepean, Esq.*

December 28, 1798.

My dear Nepean,

Under the restriction at the close of your letter of leave, I dare not go to England. In truth, I am at this moment able to undergo more fatigue than any officer on this Rock, or, I believe, in the fleet yet. As I approach the completion of my sixty-fourth year, and have never spared myself, I cannot long expect to be equal to the exertion the great scene now before me requires.

I hear Sir John Orde is endeavouring to write me down, and has not been over-scrupulous and

accurate in his assertions, which I shall take no public notice of, unless you tell me it is necessary; nor will I mention his name to you, or any one, after this date. Neither you, nor any of his nautical acquaintance, can be ignorant that he is not a practical seaman; neither has he the reach of sea understanding, ever to become a tactician. His abilities, as governor of a colony,\* I have no doubt are transcendant. Of these you must be a competent judge, from the situation you hold in the secretary of state's office, the department which he was in.

Your's, most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

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*To Evan Nepean, Esq.*

Gibraltar, 23d January, 1799.

My dear Nepean,

Sir John Orde has sent out a copy of a printed case to General O'Hara, and artfully endeavoured to draw an opinion from him, in which he has failed. I am told (for I shall not deign to read his brochure) that he has printed private letters which passed between him and me, and I think it *more than probable* he is prac-

\* Sir John Orde had been governor of Dominica.

tising upon the sea-officers under my command. As far as the matter relates to myself I am totally indifferent about the consequences; but if your Board suffers such proceedings to pass, without the most marked reprobation, you will give a *coup mortel* to subordination, of which there is very little left.

Your's, most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

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*To Evan Nepean, Esq.*

Le Souverain, Gibraltar, 5th December, 1798.

Sir,

I submit to the rebuke the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have thought fit to convey to me, for sending Rear-Admiral Sir John Orde to England without their lordships' authority so to do; but my pride of character is very much wounded by the censure contained in the latter part of your letter of the 13th October, denying positively, as I do, having ever treated him, or any other officer under my command, improperly, even when there were meetings and resolutions to resist the regulations I found it absolutely necessary to make, to preserve his Majesty's fleet under my command from the disgrace which it has suffered in other

regions ; and I am bold to affirm, that nothing short of the measures I have taken could have succeeded. I therefore desire you will state to their lordships the extreme injury my reputation suffers by a sentence passed on me, without being heard in my defence.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ST. VINCENT.

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*To Evan Nepean, Esq.*

Gibraltar, 17th February, 1799.

My dear Nepean,

Many thanks for your letters, enclosing Sir John Orde's Narrative, which I probably should never otherwise have seen. The conversations related in it consist of misrepresentations, partial statements, and gross falsehoods ; more especially the two between Sir W—— P—— and me, upon the sentences of the two courts-martial, in which I stated to him confidentially what I had written to the Admiralty, viz., that I was convinced a majority of the members composing those courts-martial were determined to traverse, as much as in their power lay, my carrying the system touching the marines into execution ; and those between

Captain Draper and me, on the subject of the supposed defection of the Irish militia, an account of which I received by two expresses in the course of the same day ; and I did not lose a moment in making the signal for all captains, and, having assembled them in my cabin, communicated, under a seal of secrecy, to all except their flag-officers, the intelligence I had received, and the measures I judged most advisable to be taken thereon. Every other conversation is most abominably twisted and distorted, for the express purpose of stabbing my character ; and he has concealed his own acts of disobedience to my orders, and arrogant presumption in counteracting them, during his séjour at Gibraltar, where he was sent for recreation, the public service not allowing a trip to Lisbon, as he wished. He has by this pamphlet proved himself so litigious a character,\*

\* \* \* \* \*

There is an insinuation at the close of the pamphlet, that I withheld the original letter which contained his charges against me, forwarded by the Blenheim ; and I request you will contrive some means to convey to him, that

\* I have here omitted a passage, which I consider a mere ebullition of temper. Much allowance must be made for both parties. The commander-in-chief, however, it must be observed, wrote for the good of the service, and the support of tottering discipline, while the rear-admiral was defending his own private honour.

it was received at the office. If I were disposed to rip him up, I could do it with great ease; but I feel so thorough a contempt for all he has said and done, that unless I discover that I am injured in the opinion of the King and his ministers, I shall certainly leave him to his own reflections—the greatest punishment which can possibly be inflicted on him.

Your's, most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

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*To Evan Nepean, Esq.*

Gibraltar, 18th February, 1799.

My dear Nepean,

I had a conversation with Major Godfrey yesterday, on the subject of your letter by him; and I have written to General Stuart, assuring him, that should he continue in the island of Minorca, I will endeavour to remove every obstacle to his ease and comfort; and I referred him to the major for the rest, having fully explained to him the difficulty I should have in finding an officer of sufficient rank to command the squadron, free from prejudices, and qualified to be entrusted with the naval defence of the island. Between you and I, there is no such person here except Lord Keith, and the squadron is not of size for a vice-admiral,



without putting Lord Nelson under his command; which would revolt his feelings, and the squadron before Cadiz be deprived of the only man capable of commanding it. For I must continue to reside on this Rock, or the operations of the detached squadrons will be cramped; and they in danger of starving, if I am not in the way to supply their wants, and to decide with promptitude upon the various exigencies which must daily arise.

Both Major Gifford and I are of opinion, that the general will embark as soon after the arrival of the William Pitt cutter as he consistently can; and I have no doubt the necessary arrangements are made, and instructions drawn, for the next in command. He has written me several letters, expressive of this determination—the air of Mahon being very pernicious to his gouty habit, and affecting his spirits dreadfully; and I have, in consequence of these letters, directed Commodore Duckworth to hold a frigate ready for his conveyance. Sir James Sinclair is an honest man, and will adhere strictly to all General Stuart's maxims. I am not a judge of his military talents, and fitness for so critical and important a trust. Where you will find a better I know not; for, if a money-making man is sent, the island will not long remain in our possession. I to-morrow

Brigadier Stuart, Colonel Graham, and Colonel Paget, are very great characters. There are some good field-officers; and a very martial spirit has been happily infused into the whole line; at which no man, since the days of Wolfe, has such a knack as General Stuart.

Did you observe in Sir John Orde's Narrative, an avowal of his having convened some of the senior captains to sit in judgment upon my conduct towards him? You have no conception how far these meetings went; and with the exception of Sir Roger Curtis, and perhaps Collingwood, I do not believe there was an officer of any standing who did not, in some sort, enter into cabals to pull down my authority, and level all distinctions. I saw this clearly, and had no other card to play but to get rid of Sir John and \* \* \* \* \* in the most summary way; and if your Board has half an eye, the necessity of the measure must have met it, and, instead of a rebuke, my conduct merited *silent* approbation, at least, if *public* could not, with propriety, have been conveyed. In short, my dear Nepean, unless the promulgation of that narrative is stamped with some mark of high displeasure, no commander-in-chief or minister is safe, and you will see your humble servant much sooner than you are aware of. I will close this with the prayer of

my old friend and messmate, Harry Danvers, who shot himself on board the Neptune—that you may, in your course through life, meet with easy fortunes, and honest people—the greatest good of all. Such is the sincere wish of

Your affectionate friend,

ST. VINCENT.

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In concluding the unhappy subject of dispute between Lord St. Vincent and Sir John Orde, I am bound to say, in favour of the latter officer, that there are many passages in his Correspondence, which, as *between gentlemen*, tell much in his favour; but neither the public nor the naval service would at this time suffer a repetition of them. That Sir John Orde was ill advised is certain; and I happen to know, almost to positive proof, who his adviser was. As an advocate for the most exact discipline, it is my duty to state, that a lengthened correspondence with a commander-in-chief is sure to end in the discomfiture of the junior officer; that Sir John Orde was entirely wrong in demanding a court-martial on the Earl of St. Vincent; equally so in calling him to a private account for the discharge of his public duty; much to blame in espousing the cause of his officers, who met the treatment they deserved; and, in refusing to rehoist his flag, which was offered to him by Lord Spencer, he committed an act suicidal of his own character.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Temporary disagreement between Earl St. Vincent and Captain Collingwood — Collingwood's observations on Nelson's appointment to the Nile — His unwilling obedience — His remarks on the state of Ireland, and the Irish mutineer — Lord St. Vincent's letter to Lady Spencer — Commented on by the Editor of Collingwood's *Memoirs* — Reply to those remarks — Justification of Lord St. Vincent's conduct — Necessity shown of leaving the choice of officers in the hands of the executive power — Officers may claim their rank by seniority, but cannot claim employment — The Articles of War, particularly the 19th and 22d, apply to all classes in the service — Comparison between the Lord High Admiral and Earl St. Vincent — None but the executive power should call a commander-in-chief to account — Collingwood's letter to J. E. Blakett — Unfair to the character and memory of Earl St. Vincent — "Pigsties and blankets" — The mutineer of the *Romulus* sent to Collingwood — Improper threat of punishment — Necessity of showing that such was not the practice of our service — Danger of their being believed — Teong's account of punishments in the reign of Queen Elizabeth — Collingwood's punishments mild, even to a fault — Reasons for Lord St. Vincent's being popular with the seamen — Anecdotes of the olden times of the navy.

LORD St. Vincent, from concurring testimony, appears to have had a high opinion of Collingwood, and probably not higher than he deserved; but the learned Editor of the *Memoirs* of Collingwood offers a curious instance "of his *demanding* and *receiving* from his superiors" that respect which, it seems, he was not inclined

to show to them in return. "On one occasion," says Mr. Collingwood (p. 56), "the Excellent was directed to weigh, when off Cadiz, and to close with the admiral's ship, and, in running down, the signal was made five or six times for altering the course, *first on one side, and then on the other*, and at length for a lieutenant. Captain Collingwood, who had been observing this in silence, ordered his boat to be manned, as he would go too. On his arrival on board he desired the lieutenant, when the order was copied, to bring it to him, and he read it while he was walking the quarter-deck with Lord St. Vincent and Sir Robert Calder. It was merely an order for the Excellent to receive on board two bags of onions for the use of the sick; and on seeing it he exclaimed, 'Bless me! is this the service, my lord? Is this the service, Sir Robert? Has the Excellent's signal been made five or six times for two bags of onions? Man my boat, sir, and let us go on board again;' and though repeatedly pressed by Lord St. Vincent to stay dinner, he refused to do so, and retired."

This was peevish, to say the least of it, and a violation of the 22d Article of War, to make the most of it, and what Collingwood himself would have resented from any other man inferior to himself in rank. Lord St. Vincent cared as little for the bags of onions as the captain,

of the Excellent, with whom he probably only wished to converse in a friendly manner at his table; and I do not think any rational officer, who knows the service, would justify the refusal of the kind invitation. It appears to me to have been a misunderstanding upon a very trivial point. Resentment shown on such occasions is a breach of discipline, and often leads to very serious consequences. Collingwood's theories and his practice seem to have been at variance. Here was an ebullition of temper, and want of respect to his superior officer; which ought never to be allowed to pass unnoticed, by those who have the least regard to the naval service.

But I have not yet done with the admiral, who, by the injudicious zeal of his learned relative, has been thrust into a prominent position, and somewhat offensively to the memory of Earl St. Vincent. I copy the words, as given by his biographer, in Lord Collingwood's letters:—

"This appointment of Admiral Nelson to a service where so much honour was to be acquired, has given great offence to the senior admirals of the fleet. Sir William Parker, who is a very excellent officer, and as gallant a man as any in the navy, and Sir John Orde, who on all occasions of service has acquitted himself with great honour, are both feeling much hurt.

at a junior officer of the same fleet having so marked a preference over them, and have written to Lord Spencer, complaining of this neglect of them. The fleet is, in consequence, in a most unpleasant state; and now all that intercourse of friendship, which was the only thing like *comfort* which was left to us, is forbidden; for the admirals and captains are desired not to entertain, even at dinner, any who do not belong to their ships. They all complain that they are appointed to many unworthy services, and *I have my share* with the rest. But I place myself beyond the reach of such matters; for I do them with all the exactness in my power, as if they were things of the utmost importance; *though I do not conceal what I think of them*. In short, I do what every body else does — wish myself at home very much.

“The accounts from Ireland give me great uneasiness. One of the mutineers, who lately suffered death in the Princess Royal, was a member of a seditious society in England, and communicated to his confessor the United Irishman’s oath. Nothing could be drawn up in stronger terms.”\*

The Editor then proceeds to say, that though Lord Collingwood was ever eager to bear testimony to the merit of all who were connected

\* This man was the pretended idiot, of whom I have spoken in another place.

with him on service, there are very few instances in his Correspondence in which he censures the conduct of others; and he (the Editor) "would have omitted some passages in the preceding letters, if it had not been for the publication of one of Lord St. Vincent's letters, in which he says, 'I pride myself in maintaining strict discipline, when surrounded by factious spirits in the lower orders, and discontent among the higher classes.' That distinguished commander was doubtless convinced, that these times demanded from him an unusual severity of discipline; yet, in justice to the higher classes in that fleet, it may surely be said, that the circumstances detailed in the above letter furnished some ground for the discontent which prevailed."

As this paragraph contains a charge both against Lord St. Vincent and myself, I shall meet it on the fullest and fairest grounds; and, first, I deny that the letter to Lady Spencer, above referred to, published in the first edition of my Naval History, vol. ii., p. 351, was intended by me to apply specifically to Lord Collingwood, or to any other officer in the fleet; and those who have so applied it must take the consequences upon themselves. If the friends of Lord Collingwood are offended, they have no one to blame but his biographer, who has fitted the charge to his relative in such a pal-



pable and undeniable manner, as to leave no doubt of his deserving whatever censure may be contained in the letter of Lord St. Vincent. So far, indeed, is Mr. Newnham Collingwood from having made out a case in favour of his noble relative, or furnished any "just grounds for discontent among the higher classes," that we are at a loss to know what he means by "unworthy services;" yet I can perfectly understand what Captain Collingwood means, when he says, "*I do not conceal what I think of them.* In short, I do what every body else does, wish myself at home very much." Now we have only to transfer these words from the mouth of a captain to that of a quarter-master, and we have at once a breach of the 19th and 22d Articles of War. Why it should be less matiny, coming from the lips of an educated person, than from one who never had any instruction, I am at a loss to conceive; unless, indeed, we adopt the words of our immortal bard—"That which in the captain is only a choleric word, is in the soldier flat blasphemy."

From what Captain Collingwood proceeds to say relative to Ireland, as above quoted, it appears that he was fully aware of the state of that country, and of the fleets both at home and abroad. It is the more surprising, therefore, that any word or act of his could, by the utmost ingenuity, be construed even into disre-

spect to his superior officer, at a time when that officer had more arduous duties imposed on him than ever before fell to the lot of any commander-in-chief, and therefore requiring from all officers near him the greatest degree of unanimity, energy, and circumspection.

It is perfectly immaterial what was the amount of the service required of the Excellent, when her signal was made to get under sail. The reasons for issuing his orders, or making his signals, were all in the bosom of the admiral, who certainly was not accountable to a junior officer for any steps he might think proper to take, any more than the lord high admiral would have been, had his flag been flying. Yet, without knowing what might have been the ulterior intention of his superior, he does not hesitate to go on board of his ship, uninvited and unordered, to call his admiral and the captain of the fleet to an account, for having presumed to make the Excellent's signal to weigh!

Had Lord St. Vincent been a tyrant, or had he ever been addicted to severity, or to the exercise of "the caprice of power," Captain Collingwood, for this violent and untimely outbreak of temper, might never have seen the peerage, with which he afterwards ennobled his family. There was nothing I would more studiously have avoided than to wound the feelings

of Mr. Newnham Collingwood, or any of his friends ; and, I might repeat, if any stigma does rest on the name of the gallant admiral, it certainly is no fault of mine.

I therefore fearlessly appeal to the navy and to the nation, whether I have not produced ample justification, from the evidence of Lord Collingwood himself, for all the measures pursued by Earl St. Vincent, when the flames of insubordination, and even rebellion, were rising around him.

I may safely say, that Earl St. Vincent, in his public conduct, was never "severe," but always cautious. It was caution which, on this occasion, induced him to prohibit the captains from entertaining each other at dinner. He knew, and every officer in the navy knew, that sedition and mutiny were spread and disseminated, in an alarming manner, by the captains boats' crews meeting alongside the ship where the dinner was given. He knew that if the captains entertained, the lieutenants and other officers would have a similar right, and how could he then refuse to extend the same indulgence to the seamen ? In that case, drunkenness and sedition would have been revived in his well-ordered fleet, and all the disorders of the Channel and North Sea ships would have been introduced, by the unbridled and licentious intercourse of ship visiting. Moreover, why

should the sailors have concealed their opinions, when the captains gave their's so openly? Why might not the sailors "*wish* themselves at home," as well as their captains? — ay, and have conducted the ships home, in spite of their officers! And they would have done it, if Lord St. Vincent, by a union of firmness, kindness, forbearance, and vigilance, had not prevented it.

Captain Collingwood's remarks, at p. 69, on the appointment of Nelson to command the detachment sent to the Nile, in preference to Sir William Parker or Sir John Orde, are not only highly reprehensible, but they offer a further and irrefragable proof, from their own lips, of Lord St. Vincent's accurate judgment as to "the discontent of the higher orders." Sentiments like these strike at the very root of the royal prerogative, and the functions of the executive power; and, coming from a man of Collingwood's sound sense, and supposed knowledge of the laws and constitution of his country, and of his own profession in particular, were fraught with the most dangerous consequences to the discipline of the navy. If it be seniority which is to guide the government in the choice of officers to execute a piece of service, or to be sent in command of their ships and fleets, the injustice began when Sir John Jervis was sent to the West Indies, when Nelson was appointed to the *Agamemnon*, when Sir John

Orde and Sir William Parker were sent to the Mediterranean. There were many officers senior to them on the list—why were *they* not sent? Admitting the merit of Sir William Parker and Sir John Orde, still I contend that the executive power *must* ever have the uncontrolled right of selecting its officers; and if it has not that right, it is no longer a government. On the alleged principle of seniority, the command of our armies or fleets would necessarily fall into the hands of imbecility; Nelson never would have commanded at Trafalgar, nor would Collingwood have fought by his side. Promotion by seniority is one thing, selection for command is another. I have a right to feel hurt at being deprived of my rank when it comes to my turn for promotion; but I have no right to complain, if the Admiralty think proper to select my junior to execute the service they contemplate for the good of the country, and for the success of which *they* are responsible. Whether the parties are on full pay or half-pay makes no sort of difference. Collingwood sent Duckworth to the Dardanelles, or he may have been ordered from home to send him there. How would he have answered the officer who should have presumed to set up a claim to such an honour, on the ground of seniority? He could only have said what Lord St. Vincent said, “Those who are responsible for measures

have a right to choose their men." In support of this proposition, I make the following extract from Clarke and M'Arthur's Life of Nelson; p. 508, 8vo. edit. :—" Earl Spencer, in writing to Earl St. Vincent, October 9, says, ' After having had a week to reflect on the event of the engagement on the coast of Egypt, and all the various and most important consequences which will ensue, if proper use is made of it, I cannot help once more congratulating your lordship on the subject, and repeating how strongly impressed I feel with the great share which your very judicious selection of ships and captains, who composed that squadron, has had in insuring to us so brilliant and decisive a result ;' and Mr. Nepean, on the same day, in a letter to Lord St. Vincent, added, ' the enclosed is a notification of Nelson's peerage. I would give a great deal, were it possible for me to be present at your first meeting ; you will hardly be questioned now, upon the propriety of your choice.' "

Next we find the commander-in-chief is called to account for the selection of the ships which he thought proper to send with Nelson on the expedition alluded to. Surely this is inconsistent with our rigid naval code, and places Collingwood at variance with himself. His lamentation runs thus, in a letter of regret to his friend Nelson, after the celebrated battle :—

“Our good chief found employment for me; and, to occupy my mind, sent me to cruize off San Luccars, to intercept the market boats of the poor cabbage-carriers. Oh humiliation! But for the consciousness that I did not deserve degradation from any hand, and that my good estimation would not be depreciated in the minds of honourable men, by *the caprice of power*, I should have died with indignation.”

Language like this from any man in the fleet would have been wrong; but from Collingwood it was at once vain, silly, and ungrateful. What degradation could there be in supporting the commander-in-chief in the most arduous and eventful crisis that any admiral ever was placed in? A superior fleet within the port of Cadiz; the arrival of a French fleet to join them, a most probable contingency; the state of Ireland; the lately suppressed mutiny in the fleet; and Collingwood's ship *supposed* to be the most *perfect model of discipline*; — these considerations would, in my mind, have made the radius within ten leagues of Cadiz light-house the most honourable post in the known world for a British ship of war. This was the ground over which the *Nymfa* and the *Esmeralda*, two Spanish frigates, not long after, ran in the night time, and landed an immense treasure. “The cabbage boats and the fishermen” took this treasure out of the frigates, and landed it all in safety in

the town of Cadiz; and when the frigates had thus discharged their valuable cargo, they were pursued on this very ground, where "the caprice of power" had placed the *Excellent*, and were destroyed or captured. This ground, too, was subsequently the immortal field of Trafalgar, where Collingwood himself acquired his peerage; and who was to say what events might not at that very time have immortalized his name? We know that there were officers, men of rank and influence, who, during the war, could pick and choose both their ships and their stations, and were much less in action than any others; but Collingwood was not of the number. His fame was honestly acquired; and it is melancholy to think that the publication of his correspondence should have given a stab to discipline which it never received before; that the high character of the commander-in-chief should have been attacked for undue selection, and for exercising "the caprice of power." The *Excellent* was, in fact, worn out, and not fit to encounter the service on which the other ships were sent. Collingwood himself proves this:—"From the state of my ship, I think I shall be the first to come home."—(p. 68); and he was ordered home immediately after. But, even if this had not been the case, will it be contended for one moment, that the admiral, in selecting a squadron for particular service, is to consult



the inclinations of his captains? Collingwood had already had the good fortune to distinguish himself in two general actions. There were other captains who accompanied Nelson, who had not been so favoured; and surely they had as fair a claim as he had to be sent on particular service, and the rather that their ships were in a sound and efficient condition, which Collingwood's *was not*, as we have seen above.

Captain Collingwood having thus reached home, there was, for a time, a truce or suspension of hostilities between him and his commander-in-chief; but unfortunately we find them together again off Brest, when (1800) another attack is made on Earl St. Vincent, and which I trust I shall prove was as unjust and unmerited as the former one. At page 80, in a letter to his friend Mr. Blackett, he says:—  
“ I do assure you, when I reflect on my long absence from all that can make me happy, it is very painful to me; and what day is there that I do not lament the continuance of the war? We are wandering before this port with no prospect of change for the better. Nothing good can happen to us short of peace. Every officer and man in the fleet is impatient for release from a situation which daily becomes more irksome to all. *I see disgust growing round me very fast.* Instead of softening the rigours of

a service which must, from its nature, be attended with many anxieties, painful watchings, and deprivations of any thing like '*comfort*,' a *contrary system is pursued*, which has not extended to me, but I see its effects on others, and deplore them. What I feel as a great misfortune is, that there is no exercise of the military part of our duty — no practice of those movements by a facility in which one fleet is made superior to another. Whoever comes here ignorant in these points must remain so, for he will find other employment about blankets and pigsties, and tumbling provisions out of one ship into another."

This whole paragraph contains a string of direct, and, I may say, malignant and unfounded charges against the memory of Earl St. Vincent. This reluctant and unwilling obedience to orders, which Captain Collingwood has shown to us in his conduct off Cadiz, must have been contagious, and produced those very effects which he pretends to deplore. Every one knows that the ruler of France had the earliest and most correct intelligence of whatever was passing in the British fleet; and, if he had thought that, by continuing the war a little longer, he could fan the flame of discontent in our ships, and produce thereby an open display of insubordination, the results to England might have been most disastrous. Ceylon, the Cape,

Trinidad, and even Jamaica, might have been lost to us in the definitive treaty by "*Captains not concealing their opinions.*" There is a vast difference between a willing, cheerful, and zealous obedience, and the simply doing duty, obeying orders, "*and not concealing opinions.*"

Let such language and sentiments as these come from the fore-castle instead of the quarter-deck, (and we know, from fatal experience, how soon it did reach the fore-castle,) and we have an entire solution of the causes which produced the mutiny in Bantry Bay. Not that I impute any such criminal intention to Collingwood; but I collect enough from his own writings to know that he was very incautious.

The remarks in Collingwood's letters are too important to be passed over with slight censure. The well-being of our navy, and its future discipline, are at stake, in the opinion that shall prevail concerning them. Either Lord St. Vincent or Collingwood was to blame, both could not be right; and I must contend that the commander-in-chief, being responsible for his acts to the executive government only, could only by that power be censured and called to account for them.

Expert as our sailors and our officers were in the management of their ships, would the pastime off Brest have been more agreeable or less "*disgusting,*" if the people had been employed

in the practical illustration of Clarke's Naval Tactics? Was it in the power of Lord St. Vincent to have softened the rigours of the service by tormenting officers and men with the by-gone theories of Paul La Hoste? Yet this was what Collingwood wished to impose on them, by way of compensation for their "painful watchings, and deprivations of every thing like comfort." I am much inclined to believe, from what I knew of the minds and dispositions of seamen in those days, that they preferred the "blanket and pigsty" system — in other words, the system of making them comfortable. On this point I must say a few words.

Lord St. Vincent spared no pains to keep his ships in such a state as to preserve the health of the crews. The airing of bedding at all times of the year, but especially in the summer season, of which we are now speaking, was justly considered a matter of the highest importance. Nothing is more conducive to health and comfort than this indispensable process, which was very far from being unpleasant to the seamen: who, while their bedding and blankets were hanging up in the rigging, and getting well shook in the wind, were employed in mending their clothes, and other useful, or to them, agreeable occupations. Thus employed, I have always seen the men cheerful and happy, rummaging their chests and bags, clearing out

their berths, and greatly increasing their little comforts below.

The "pigsties" were a very serious evil, a sad nuisance to the men, though perhaps affording occasionally a luxury to the officers; but they were a poor compensation for the stench, filth, and foul air generated in the ship by the keeping of these animals, which are tolerable only in a farm-yard. The evil, however, had long been endured in the service; and Lord St. Vincent, by the advice of his able medical staff, was resolved to get the better of it. He, therefore, with his accustomed firmness, attacked this "comfort" of the officers, so much bewailed by Captain Collingwood, and succeeded in ridding our ships of war of this unhealthy nuisance, I hope for ever.

I must make one more quotation from the memoir of Collingwood.

"It was during this time (so full of peril to the navy and to England) that Lord St. Vincent repressed in the Mediterranean the spirit of mutiny which had unhappily prevailed at the Nore. No officer regarded with greater admiration the conduct of that distinguished commander than did Captain Collingwood, *or co-operated with more zeal and effect in the prompt and decisive measures* which were then pursued; and of this the Admiral was so convinced that it was his frequent practice to draft the most

ungovernable spirits into the *Excellent* :—“ Send them to Collingwood,” he used to say, “and he will bring them to order.” Notwithstanding this, while capital punishments were frequently taking place in other ships, Captain Collingwood, by the kind, but firm, conduct which he adopted towards his crew, was enabled to maintain discipline, not only without being driven to the dreadful necessity of bringing men to trial for their lives, but almost without the infliction of any corporal punishment whatsoever.

“On one occasion, a seaman had been sent from the *Romulus*, who had pointed one of the fore-castle guns, shotted to the muzzle, at the quarter-deck, and, standing by it with a match, declared that he would fire at the officers unless he received a promise that no punishment should be inflicted on him. On his arrival on board the *Excellent*, Captain Collingwood, in the presence of many of the sailors, said to him, with great sternness of manner, ‘I know your character well; but beware how you attempt to excite insubordination in this ship; for I have such confidence in my men that I am certain I shall hear in an hour of every thing you are doing. If you behave well in future, I will treat you like the rest, nor notice here what happened in another ship; but, if you endeavour to excite mutiny, mark me well, I will instantly head you up in a cask, and throw you into the sea.’ Under

the treatment which he met with in the Excellent, this man became a good and obedient sailor, and never afterwards gave any cause of complaint."

Without the smallest wish to contradict the learned editor, I must beg to question the whole of this statement. The characters and memories of Earl St. Vincent and of Captain Collingwood equally demand it. Can Mr. Collingwood, conversant as he must be, or ought to be, in the laws of his country, both civil and martial, mean to say that such was the method adopted by his noble relative for the suppression of mutiny? Does he wish us or posterity to suppose that it was the custom of our service to head a mutineer up in a cask, and throw him into the sea? and that it was sanctioned by Earl St. Vincent? Surely not. Nor, from what I have already related, does it appear that Captain Collingwood was that inexorable martinet, or that unconditional ultra-supporter of his commander-in-chief, which it is attempted to make him out.

At page 52, we find Captain Collingwood, between the 21st of May and the 12th of September, 1793, had punished twelve men, for the most atrocious crimes known in our Naval Code, except murder, and the one denounced in the 29th Article of War. We have mutiny, theft, absence from duty, a sentinel *quitting* his post, stealing a bag of money and clothes,

a centinel *sleeping on* his post, drunkenness, fighting, and riotous behaviour, mutinously propogating slanderous reports tending to excite discontent among the men, disobedience of orders, bringing liquor into the ship, and contemptuous behaviour. All these are very grave and serious charges, and if proved should have been very severely punished ; for none of the delinquents could be called men of character, or were likely to plead previous good conduct. What shall we say then to the officer who, having turned the hands up, and gone through all the ceremony of punishment—quarter-masters, gratings, foxes, cats, and boatswains' mates—gives to the most atrocious of these offenders twelve lashes, and to the least six ! I am no friend to punishment, but I must say that here Captain Collingwood showed himself to be the most unfit man in the navy to have charge of such a ruffian as we have seen described. Moreover, it is not likely that Earl St. Vincent would have overlooked such conduct, or, if he did, that he would have sent such an ungovernable villain to the mild and amiable Collingwood to be reclaimed. “ Lenity at first is severity at last.”\*

Again, I deny the frequency of capital punishments in the fleet under the command of Earl St. Vincent, as compared with other stations of the British navy. The Princes Royal, the St.

\* Duke of Clarence to Lord Nelson.—Clarke and M'Arthur, p. 423.



George, the Defence, and the Emerald, are the only ships I can now recollect, on board of which there were any executions. When the fleet amounted to seventy or eighty sail of pendants, all the rest were in very good order, and kept so, I dare say, with as little use of the cat as there appeared to be on board the Excellent. I agree with Captain Collingwood that a union of mildness and firmness is the best way to govern men ; and I will even admit that such was the plan he pursued generally ; which, aided by his own good example, and making *his officers do their duty*, embraced the entire secret of the discipline and good order on board the Excellent. But why should he have had recourse to idle threats of doing what he knew he dare not do ? and, what is still worse, which the sailors knew he would not do ; thus subjecting himself to be called “ a barking dog ? ”

Teonge, the chaplain, tells us that in the days of Queen Elizabeth mutinous sailors were tied up in a bag and hung at the bowsprit end, with a biscuit, a bottle of beer, and a knife ; so that when the culprit was tired of his situation, he might release himself from it by suicide, either cutting his throat or cutting the bag and falling into the sea. Another summary mode, it appears by the same author, was, suspending him from the yard-arm by the heels, (while the ship was rolling) at sea ; so that, in the course of half an

hour, the repeated thumps against the ship's side would not leave a whole bone in his skin. All this, for the honour of Queen Elizabeth and her ministers, I hope is not true. At all events, I will not believe it. My present business is to prevent the honoured memory of George III., of Earl St. Vincent, and of Lord Collingwood, from being slandered in a similar manner.

It may be said that Lord Collingwood never intended to put a man to death in the way he threatened. This I admit; but, having made the threat, posterity will not know whether he would or could have carried it into execution, unless the matter is formally explained by an officer who served at sea during the period in question. Without this contradiction, our successors may be as much in doubt about the humanity of the British Government under George the III. and his successors, as I am about Queen Elizabeth and the veracity of Mr. Teonge. Punishments, in order to have their due effect, should never be lightly resorted to; but, when the necessity does occur, as Captain Collingwood has proved in twelve cases, it ought to be met with the firmness of a judge and the mildness of a Christian. Too much consideration for guilt is often cruelty to the innocent, and I have known the best officers and the best men tormented and disgusted by long speeches and slight punishments. As to

the *begging-off* system, fit only for an infant school, it was the ruin of discipline. The man either deserved punishment or he did not, and the *captain*, not "the young gentlemen," ought to decide for the good of the service. The sailors always laughed at those officers who were guilty of "preachy and floggee." If Lord St. Vincent was popular among his men, (which I believe him to have been) he owed it in a great measure to his manly, straightforward mode of treating them. He never punished for trifles, and never overlooked crimes.

The foregoing remarks are not made in ill-humour. I feel the same respect for the memory of Lord Collingwood which I ever did. I recommend his example (with the above exception) to the study and imitation of the profession; but I dare not pass over errors which might be productive of fatal consequences, or mislead men who are in search of solid information, and desirous of forming their characters on the most approved models of our service.

I remember hearing a story in the year 1798, which was told at the ward-room table, and which I should have been inclined to doubt, had it not been for the specimens afforded in the foregoing instances. A captain was reported to have made repeated and troublesome demands for blocks which could not be obtained. The

captain of the fleet seems to have been irritated, and, in a hasty and improper manner, to have replied, "Sir, I cannot find blocks for you; my father and mother were not block-makers." The reply to this vulgar rebuke was equally undignified. "I know very well, sir, that your father and mother were not block-makers, any more than mine; they only produced such blocks as these," laying his hand at the same time on the bald head of the captain of the fleet, his superior officer!

Such language and such scenes as the above and the following are, I trust, never to be repeated in our service. Bad taste and vulgarity must soon give way to the more enlightened system of our own days. The manners and habits of officers are more gentlemanly, and there is less of that crying sin, of captains courting popularity with the seamen, at the expense of their officers—talking at them, and turning them into ridicule. The mast-heading of the young and even the elder midshipmen is discontinued, by an order from the Admiralty. That order has been delayed too long by half a century.

About the year 1790, many young men of the first families, following the example of the Duke of Clarence, began to flock into the navy. One ship in particular was remarkable for having a great many of them. The younger ones were

accustomed to reef and furl the mizen-topsail. One day, when they were aloft furling sails, the captain thus addressed them from the quarter-deck : " My lords and gentlemen, and you right honourable lubbers on the mizen-topsail-yard, roll that sail up and come down."

## CHAPTER XVII.

Anxieties of Earl St. Vincent after the battle of the 14th February — His plans for keeping the sailors employed, and diverting their minds — Bombardment of Cadiz — Eagerness for blood — Nelson's boat-fight off Cadiz — He is sent to Teneriffe — Is unsuccessful, and loses his arm — Rejoins Lord St. Vincent, and returns to England — Fearful crisis for Great Britain — Vast preparations of the enemy in Brest, Cadiz, Carthagens, and Toulon — Earl St. Vincent gains intelligence of their movements — Appointment of Nelson to the command of the squadron — Jealousy of the other officers — Management of Lord St. Vincent in sending away the detachment — Value of insular governments in both hemispheres — Lord St. Vincent retires to Gibraltar — His vigilance — Reasons for keeping his lordship on the station not well founded — Collingwood a victim to the same — Lord St. Vincent's idea of coming at an able commander-in-chief — British admirals often too old to go to sea — Sir Sydney Smith's appointment to the Eastern part of the Mediterranean occasions much jealousy against him — Severe observations made on him by Earl St. Vincent, answered — Letter from Earl St. Vincent to Earl Spencer on the appointment of Sir Sydney Smith — Letter to Mr. Nepean — To the same — Prejudices against Sir Sydney Smith — Justification of the government in choosing him — His brilliant services at Acre.

AFTER the brilliant victory of the 14th February, we had the sad reverse of the mutiny. The latter, having happily passed away, left our officers better, and our men worse, than they were before it occurred. Under these circumstances, Lord St. Vincent saw what was want-

ing ; he perceived that a fleet lying idle before Cadiz could not be productive of any benefit to the service ; yet, to blockade the port effectually, he knew that the ships must lay at anchor. The wear and tear of rope, sails, masts, yards, and hulls of the ships, when kept under weigh, was enormous, and almost incredible. Still the enemy was to be watched and annoyed, and the crews of the British ships were to be excited by some object of enterprise. Cadiz, therefore, the beautiful, the inoffensive town of Cadiz, with its lovely and interesting scenery, was to be made the scape-goat. A bombardment was ordered, and Nelson was to conduct it. The Spanish fleet of ten sail of the line, under Mazerado and Gravina, was quickly warped up the harbour, to avoid the shells of the Thunder and Strombolo bombs.

I take no pleasure in rating the damage which was done on this occasion. I know we were compelled by dire necessity to seek our enemies, and to destroy them ; but here, alas, we were destroying our friends ; for the Spaniards always esteemed us, although their good opinion was sometimes suspended by the artifice and fraud of our enemies.

This was a period in our history when nothing seemed to satisfy us but the blood of all who were opposed to us. Like the ferocious beasts of the desert, we seemed to live for that only :

it occupied even our sleeping thoughts. I will mention a curious instance of this latter. A young officer, whom I knew intimately, was seized on the last step of the ship's side, just as he was going to plunge into the water and into eternity. He was armed and equipped for the fight, but he was fast asleep! Nelson had inspired every one, and every one strove to be Nelsons. The excitement was truly astonishing — it was more — it was dreadful. We were no longer christians — we were scarcely men — so entirely were we changed by the desperate character of our revolution-bred antagonists.

Cadiz defended itself nobly. Nelson had a narrow escape of his life ; and, from this service, so unbecoming his character, his rank, or his genius, he was soon diverted, by Lord St. Vincent sending him with a detachment to attack the town of Santa Cruz, in the island of Teneriffe. This proved a failure ; but it was well planned ; and could the ships have brought their broadsides to bear on the town, the result of the attack, on the 21st of July, must have been successful. Unfortunately, this could not be done. The second attack, on the 25th, was giving the enemy too great an advantage over a handful of the bravest men that ever faced a gun. On this occasion, Nelson lost his arm, Bowen his life, and England 250 of those invaluable men. Had the attack succeeded, the



rich cargoes of two galleons, laden with specie, would have rewarded the assailants.

Rejoining his admiral, wounded and desponding, Lord St. Vincent gave Nelson all the consolation of which his condition was susceptible. He immediately afterwards sent him to England in the Seahorse frigate, where, having recovered his health, he lost no time in rejoining his favourite chief off Cadiz. The Vanguard, of 74 guns, commanded by Captain Berry, was prepared to receive Nelson's flag, which he hoisted at Spithead on the 16th of March, 1798, and, in the following month, was again with Earl St. Vincent before Cadiz.

This was a most important and fearful crisis for our country. The mutiny in the British fleet was not extinct; Ireland was in a state of open rebellion; and the French fleet in Brest was constantly sending out its detachments, in ships of the line, frigates, or transports, laden with arms, ammunition, artillery, and troops, intended to aid the rebels. The Spaniards had a strong squadron, if not a fleet, in Cadiz; and in Carthagená they had other ships. At Toulon, also, vast preparations were in a state of forwardness, the ultimate destination of which none but Buonaparte and the executive directory knew any thing about. Lord St. Vincent had early intimation from his correspondents at Naples, that the French were plotting mischief,

and his judgment led him to the most effectual means of counteraction. He despatched Nelson, with the *Vanguard*, *Orion*, and *Alexander*, each of 74 guns, the two latter commanded by Saumarez and Ball, with four frigates, viz., *Flora*, *Emerald*, *Caroline*, *Terpsichore*, and *Bonne Citoyenne*, sloop of war. With this squadron Nelson went off Toulon.

Here we must notice a very important crisis in the histories both of Earl St. Vincent and of Lord Nelson. The latter had been sent out by Earl Spencer with the highest testimony of regard; and Lord St. Vincent, in reply, (see Clarke and M'Arthur, p. 452) expresses his sense of the favour conferred by sending out such an officer to support him.

It appears from this communication, also, that, while Lord St. Vincent held the veto of appointment to the important command of the detached squadron, Nelson was expressly recommended to fill it by Lord Spencer.—“If you determine to send a detachment into the Mediterranean, I think it almost unnecessary to suggest to you the propriety of putting it under the command of Sir Horatio Nelson.”

Lord St. Vincent *did* determine to send a detachment into the Mediterranean. He saw and knew what was going on upon the coast of Provence; his eyes were every where; and while he gave Nelson thirteen sail of the line

of his best ships, besides the *Leander* and the frigates, he reserved to himself a certain number to remain with him off Cadiz, a post of honour as well as of imminent danger, both from the elements and the chance of being attacked by a superior enemy. Collingwood, therefore, had no right to complain of being excluded from the squadron of his friend Nelson.

The mortification occasioned to the allies by the loss of Venice, and the treaty of Campo Formio, in 1797, were amply compensated in the following year by the battle of the Nile. Its effects on the politics of Europe are too well known to need any repetition here. The whole of the credit of that glorious victory belongs to Nelson ; for the Earl of St. Vincent, I only lay claim to the honour of having judged it expedient to send a force into the Mediterranean ; for the acuteness and talent he displayed in his selection of ships and a leader for the service ; for the orders which he gave him ; for his accurate knowledge of the designs of the enemy, and the unwearied patience and diligence with which he watched every point of probable attack, and guarded against every means of escape. He kept *Trowbridge*, with his ten sail of the line, ready off Cadiz, to part company the moment Sir Roger Curtis with his reinforcement should heave in sight. When that officer appeared, on the 24th of May, *Trow-*

bridge was dismissed to join Nelson off Toulon ; but the wary St. Vincent would not allow the enemy to know that he had sent off a detachment, much less the course they had taken. Trowbridge was therefore directed to part company in the night ; and before daylight the following morning the ships which had been detached from the inshore squadron were replaced by others, painted in a manner exactly similar, so that no difference in the number or appearance of his fleet was perceived.

In making his selection on this memorable occasion, Lord St. Vincent had many difficulties to contend with, and many obstacles to overcome. Sir William Parker and Sir John Orde, both senior to Nelson, claimed a prior right to command the detachment. Lord St. Vincent, as we have before seen, overthrew this remonstrance in one moment, by the well known, and I hope never to be forgotten, answer :—"Those who are responsible for measures, have a right to choose their men."

In writing to Nelson on this occasion, Lord St. Vincent says, that the two above-named officers had made strong representations against his appointment — that they had written home contrary to his (Lord St. Vincent's) advice—that they were supported by a powerful faction, the enemies of Nelson—but that they would both of them be superseded.

The history of the events which succeeded in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, are fully detailed in the Naval History of Great Britain, vol. ii. As commander-in-chief on the Mediterranean station, Lord St. Vincent received the official despatches of this action, and transmitted them to the Admiralty, but not before they had arrived in England in duplicate by another route; the *Leander*, which had the originals, having been taken on her passage home, after one of the most gallant and well contested actions ever fought or recorded in the naval annals of this country.

The French having, by a bold and masterly manœuvre, obtained possession of Malta, containing the finest harbour in the Mediterranean, and reckoned among the best and most secure in the world, might at that time, and from that circumstance alone, be considered to hold the command of those seas; Corsica, Sicily, and Sardinia, being completely under their control. The possession, therefore, of a naval port for Great Britain in that sea, became a matter of the first importance; and whether by orders from home or by his own judgment, I know not, but it was determined to attack Minorca, and get possession of the harbour of Port Mahon. This island formerly belonged to us. We took it in 1708, but lost it in 1756, when the unhappy Byng was murdered by law for not being gifted

with superior talents. In 1763, it was restored to us, and remained in our hands till the Spaniards took it in 1782; and, to the everlasting disgrace of the ministry of that day, they were allowed to retain it, by the peace of Paris in the following year.

Lord St. Vincent sent Commodore Duckworth in the *Leviathan*, of 74 guns; with the *Centaur*, 74, Captain J. Markham; *Argo*, 44, Captain Bowen; *Aurora*, 28, Captain (now Vice Admiral Sir Henry) Digby; *Cormorant*, 18, Honourable Courtney Boyle, now a rear admiral; and *Peterel*, 18, Captain Long. The land forces were commanded by Lieutenant General the Hon. Charles Stewart. The number was small, but proved fully equal to the task. The island submitted to the British forces in a very few days; and Lord St. Vincent had the satisfaction of seeing a useful naval arsenal in complete operation for the repair of his ships at Port Mahon. This place continued to be our great resort, until the peace of 1814 again most unfortunately and unaccountably restored it to Spain.

Captain Ball continued the blockade of Malta with unabated vigour, and, on the 28th of October, took the little island of Goza, its dependency. This island was presented by Great Britain to his Sicilian majesty, but I am not aware by what claim his majesty was entitled to that attention. When Malta subsequently

fell into our hands, the wily chief consul, who so well knew the value of it, would gladly have exchanged for it the contemptible islands of Lampedosa. I will not affirm that the exchange would have been made had not Lord St. Vincent been appealed to, but I will fearlessly say that his firm and decided opinion, grounded on local and professional knowledge, entirely put an end to the negociation ; and, happily for the honour and interest of Britain, Malta is still our's.

Lord St. Vincent, now in the 64th year of his age, had for three years been on unceasing hard service—a species of service even more wearing to the mind than to the body ; yet the latter partook very sensibly of the decay and dilapidation produced by the excitement of the mental faculties. In the month of October, 1798, he retired to Gibraltar, and resided on shore, while he directed the various great concerns of his extensive command, with much vigour and judgment. Nothing escaped his vigilant eye. He rewarded, punished, stimulated, and encouraged, as he saw occasion ; and, while he conducted an extensive correspondence with his own government at home, he managed to communicate with foreign powers, to preserve good understanding and harmony where tumult or disagreement might be apprehended. He carefully watched the progress of the most minute as well as the greatest concerns ; and so sensible

was the Board of Admiralty of his entire adaptation to the station in which he was placed, that, although he had requested to be superseded, their lordships did not think they could find an officer on the list equal to the trust.

I cannot help here observing, that this was a conclusion at once insulting to the navy and injurious to the service. We have a saying that "there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it;" and Lord St. Vincent used to say that he would bring a flag promotion three hundred down the list of captains, in order to come at a man fit to command. 'This was a wise and statesman-like declaration. When the state is to be served, both private feeling and public economy are to be alike disregarded. There were at that time many men of transcendant merit on our list of junior admirals and captains; but, although they had knowledge, and energy, and genius in abundance, they wanted *seniority*, and they wanted *interest*. Buonaparte always employed young generals and young admirals; whereas, in our service, generally speaking, before we attain to that envied rank we have become heirs to all the defects of humanity — "Sans eyes, sans teeth," &c.

Residing at Rosia House, and looking out upon the Bay of Gibraltar, commanding a view at once of the coast of Barbary from Ceuta to



Cape Spartel, with the entrance to the Straits, and the coast of Spain from Cabrita Point up to the Neutral Ground or the Orange Grove; we are now to contemplate our chief in one of the most extensive and important posts perhaps ever entrusted to a British admiral. His cruizers were extending their vigilance from the western islands to the shores of Egypt and the Dardanelles. The admiral's flag was flying on board the *Souverain*, which lay in the Mole as a sheer hulk and receiving ship. No wind that blew but what brought him some intelligence to excite his hopes or to put him on his guard: either a prize arrived, or the account of a battle, or the expectation of one; despatches from England commanding immediate attention, or advices from Nelson, fraught with important events from the scenes of action.

Lord St. Vincent's letters from the Rock sufficiently testify his anxiety of mind under these circumstances, and convince us that if his position was honourable, it had its cares and its torments, which would have worn out a mind and frame less firm and less robust than his.

The arrival of Sir Sydney Smith on the station was the first subject that seemed to have caused any uneasiness between the commander-in-chief and Earl Spencer; but this feeling, I have reason to think, was merely transient and soon forgotten. Sir Sydney Smith was no common person; and

though not always successful, and sometimes very florid in his descriptions, yet he was an officer who sought out danger, and brought himself into notice in a manner worthy of imitation. I feel some pride in saying that Sir Sydney Smith first went to sea as a midshipman with my father, then commander of the *Tortoise* store ship. He must have obtained his promotion when very young, for I find him first lieutenant of the *Resolution*, of 74 guns, in the memorable battle of the 12th April, 1782, when his captain (Lord Robert Manners) was mortally wounded. Sir Sydney, from the time he entered our service, displayed an extraordinary degree of courage and enterprize, and I sincerely lament that he was no favourite with Lord St. Vincent, Lord Nelson, or Trowbridge. This was not his fault, but entirely owing to the government, which attempted to give him an independent command, where these officers were serving, and had already displayed so much talent and zeal.

That there was a coup de hache (as Lord St. Vincent termed it, in speaking of another person) in our gallant knight, I admit; but it was of that noble and chivalrous character which ever led him to attempt something beyond the common scope of human action. Sir Sydney never spared himself. He was ever present in danger, and the last to retreat from it; equally

gallant and enterprizing with his cotemporary Cochrane, but less cautious and less of a sailor. Both these valuable officers were latterly lost to the service, because the Admiralty would not, when they might have done it, give them sufficient employment at sea, and keep them at work. It may, however, be safely said of both, and I believe it will be generally allowed in the service, that they were neither of them so well fitted for independent commands, as they were for seconds; none were so eminently qualified to conduct a coup de main, while a superior officer was within signal.

I shall now proceed to give some of Lord St. Vincent's letters, written at the important crisis glanced at above.

*To Earl Spencer, First Lord of the Admiralty.*

November 27th, 1798.

My Lord,

It being an invariable maxim with me to promote his majesty's service by every means in my power, the instant Sir Sydney Smith arrived and produced his instructions, (the first communication I received of his mission), I did every thing in my power to accelerate his progress; and I have engaged to send the *Theseus* to him, Captain Miller being the officer of his choice. He carried a suit of sails for each of the ships, now with Lord Nelson, which was in

the action the 1st of August, and is directed to deposit them at Syracuse, unless he finds a moral certainty of joining his lordship without being put much out of his course. The Strombolo bomb vessel, unaccountably left behind when the Santa Dorothea, Perseus, and Bulldog, with the three bomb tenders sailed, takes the protection of le Tigre to Syracuse, and I trust they will get out of the bay this evening.

I have the honour,

My lord, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

*To Evan Nepean, Esq.*

Gibraltar, 9th January, 1799.

My dear Nepean,

I wish you would send out instructions to Lieutenant Crawford, Governor of the Naval Hospital at this place. He is a very honest, persevering man, and, armed with power, will assist me in correcting the abominable abuses carrying on between the surgeon and agent, and the contractors. Between ourselves, your Scottish Board of Commissioners gives me no assistance in this business, and I have reason to believe are talked over, or drove over by the Messrs. Andersons.

Your's truly,

ST. VINCENT.

(EXTRACT.\*)

*To Evan Nepean, Esq.*

Gibraltar, January 16th, 1799.

My dear Nepean,

The royal family of Naples have had a narrow escape. Tuscany is gone, and Spain and Portugal will follow, whenever it so pleases the directory; for the governments of both increase in weakness and oppression, in proportion to the dangers by which they are threatened from without.

Your's most truly,

ST. VINCENT.

*To Earl Spencer.*

Gibraltar, January 16th, 1799.

My Lord,

An arrogant letter, written by Sir Sydney Smith to Sir Wm. Hamilton, when he joined the squadron forming the blockade of Malta, has wounded Rear-Admiral Lord Nelson to the quick, (as per enclosed) who, besides, feels himself affronted by his embassy *and separate command*, which compels me to put this strange man immediately under his lordship's

• To have published the whole of the above letter might have been considered a violation of secrecy.

orders, or the king may be deprived of his (Lord Nelson's) important services, and those of many valuable officers, as superior to Sir Sydney Smith in all points, as he is to the most ordinary of men. I experienced a trait of the presumptuous character of this young man, during his short stay at Gibraltar, which I passed over, that it might not appear to your lordship I was governed by prejudice in my conduct towards him.

I enclose a copy of Lord Nelson's detailed account of the transaction at Naples, previous to the departure of the royal family, and of the passage to Palermo. These events make the island of Minorca of incalculable importance. I therefore trust the representations I had the honour to make to Mr. Dundas, two months ago, have been attended to, and we shall soon be supplied with the means of reinforcing the garrison; which becomes the more necessary because General Stuart (who is a host in himself) finds his health so much impaired by the air of the island, which I have known to disagree with many, that he cannot continue there; and where an officer like him can be found I know not. But it is of the most material consequence that an able and disinterested man should succeed him, or our tenure will be very precarious indeed.

I have the honour, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

I must here observe, with reference to the preceding letter, that as Earl St. Vincent was justified in the choice of Nelson, so were Earl Spencer and Mr. Pitt in the selection of Sir Sydney Smith for the particular service in which he was employed? Their manner of doing it only was irregular. The defence of Acre will immortalize the name of Sir Sydney Smith, and rank him at the head of the defenders of that celebrated fortress.\* The civilized world might be said to be the spectator of his deeds, while his inadequate and daily dwindling forces were opposed by all the élite of valour and science which France could boast of, and of which she was justly proud. Fortunate was it for Britain that her cause in Syria was in such hands. The siege of Acre, in 1799, will ever form one of the brightest episodes in our history.

\* The reader who is fond of exciting scenes of war will be gratified in turning over the pages of De Vertot's *Knights of Malta*, fol. ed., in which he will find the history of three sieges of Acre at different periods. Pages 82, 99, 171.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Earl St. Vincent, on the Rock of Gibraltar, endeavours to get the better of the wine-house nuisance — Fails, as did his Royal Highness the Duke of Kent at a subsequent period — Remarks on — Spanish gun-boats from Algeziras — Attacking our trade — Anecdote of a patron — Letter from Earl St. Vincent to Earl Spencer — To the same, on the abuses on the Rock and in the dock-yard — Corrected by Commissioner Inglefield — To the same, on the injustice done to Captain Newhouse — To Mr. Nepean, on the scarcity of stores in the dock-yard — To Earl Spencer, in favour of Mr. Morrison — To the same, on the improvements on the Rock, with respect to store-houses and tanks, &c. — Corfu surrendered to the Turks and Russians — To Earl Spencer, on the demands of the Sicilian court for assistance, and the impossibility of granting more than had been afforded — On the discontent of Nelson and Trowbridge — Observations on that subject — Letter from Lord St. Vincent to Mr. Nepean, on Mr. Baynes's claims — To Earl Spencer, on the dock-yard at Mahon — Observations on the importance of that island — Letter to Earl Spencer, on the defective state of the ships on the Mediterranean station — To Mr. Nepean, on the Portuguese squadron being withdrawn from the blockade of Malta — To Admiral Gambier, on the promotion of Captain Newhouse — To Earl Spencer, on the affairs of Sicily — On Duckworth's services and claims for a baronetcy — To the same, on the request of the Spanish government for a British frigate to bring home their treasures — To Mr. Nepean, on the trial of mutineers — To Earl Spencer, on the flag promotion.

In the following series of letters we are able to discover, that the battle of Aboukir, and the glorious successes of Nelson, had not removed from Lord St. Vincent the load of cares and



anxieties which had previously rested on him. He was still on the Rock of Gibraltar, where he was obliged to keep a watchful eye on every part of his station. True, he had delegated, by the authority of his superiors, a vast portion of power, and consequently some responsibility, to Nelson, who was stationed on the Neapolitan coast, with the charge of the siege, or rather the blockade of Malta.

It is melancholy to observe how the best plans of the most upright of our statesmen, intended for the public good, are thwarted by the mere private interests of individuals ; yet such has ever been the case, to a certain degree, in this country : it is, in fact, the bane of England, and her dependencies. In the case, for instance, of Gibraltar, the drunkenness of the troops and sailors in the licensed wine-houses, threatened considerable danger, and gave serious uneasiness to the commander-in-chief of the fleet in 1798. At a much later period, his Royal Highness the Duke of Kent endeavoured to check this abuse ; but, instead of succeeding, he was compelled to yield to the evil, and to return home ; and the Jews, the Moors, and the corrupt and demoralized among our own countrymen, still carry on their ruinous system of legalized murder against our brave fellows.

With respect to the insults offered to British commerce in the bay, and under the very guns

of the fortress of Gibraltar, I own myself at a loss to give any satisfactory explanation of the matter. An officer on guard at Europa Point was, in the year 1799, put under arrest for firing a single shot at these rascally marauders, when attacking a British sloop of war and convoy. The governor's reason for this act of severity was not at all explained by any alleged fear of firing into the town. These boats should have been met by British boats of the same size, well manned and commanded. Had this been done, this nuisance would have been speedily abated.

It is certain, that the patrons or captains of these marauding boats had occasional intercourse with the Rock. An officer of my acquaintance, who had been closely and warmly engaged with one of them a few hours before, perceived him afterwards standing behind his chair, as he sat at the governor's dinner-table. The gallant Englishman handed his antagonist a very liberal allowance of plum-pudding, and a glass of wine, which the Spaniard took with perfect nonchalance !

*To Earl Spencer, First Lord of the Admiralty.*

Gibraltar, 16th January, 1799.

My Lord,

I thought it a proper respect and attention to the governor, to apprise him of the favourable reception the proposition I had

made, for the removing the victualling stores from Waterport to Rosier, had met with; and he having, in a previous conversation, informed me that a part of them was essentially necessary for the defence of the garrison, and that he should apply to the Ordnance Board for the purchase of it, I assured him that the sale should not take place until he had an answer to his application. Your lordship will perceive by his answer, that he is laying in for an increase of the revenue; the bane of the garrison and fleet, for it keeps both soldiers and seamen in a continual state of intoxication. This claim of ground-rent upon the property, when transferred from the crown to an individual, will tend very much to injure the sale. At present we are sanguine enough to expect twenty thousand pounds for the buildings and ground at Waterport, exclusive of the White Convent, and the residence of the agent, which will probably bring in five thousand; I therefore submit to your lordship, whether resistance should not be made to this claim, which has been hatched by Mr. Secretary R—— and Mr. S——d. The unlimited powers of a governor of Gibraltar have been, before my time of command, frequently exercised to the prejudice of the naval service, and we find great difficulty in preserving our rights—the juries, composed of interested merchants, always deciding against

us, as in a recent trial ; and had I not exerted myself, we should not only have lost a useful piece of land, but have been subject to the payment of a ground-rent for forty years back. The governor also talks of a limitation to our deed of sale, and that it shall only convey for forty years to come.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

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*To Earl Spencer.*

Gibraltar, 21st January, 1799.

My Lord,

The language of despondence which has obtained in this garrison, during the last three years, has tended greatly to discourage all ranks of people, and the Spanish gun-boats having been held up as most formidable machines, it is not an easy matter to persuade any body to face them. Our inferiority is certainly very great ; and we are, by the late event, reduced to three, while the enemy always has from twelve to twenty. I have also to observe, that there has been a great want of vigour and exertion in the dock-yard, which, I have the satisfaction to assure your lordship, is completely done away, and we now think ourselves equal to any thing. Commissioner Inglefield is an honest man, and sufficiently intelligent, but

pompous, flowery, indolent, and wrapt up in official forms—stay-tape and buckram. He has, however, corrected many gross and abominable abuses and peculations, practised under his predecessors. There is still much to do; and, to prevent the artificers from employing their time in working upon masts, boats, &c., upon the beach, between the north boundary of the yard and the tanks, it will be necessary to continue the wharf, so as to join the pier projecting from them; and I have the governor's permission so to do. This will materially check, if not entirely put an end to, the shipwrights slipping through the wicket, prevent thefts, and give great space for the operations of a fleet. In short, much more may be made of this arsenal than I was aware of, until a three months' residence, and unremitted attention to it, showed me the means. Five or six ships of the line may be moored with safety in the Mole; and, while we maintain our naval superiority in the Mediterranean, with the additional works I have recommended, it will prove a very great resource; especially if the governors of the garrison will think as I do, that the only use of Gibraltar is to furnish the navy of Great Britain with supplies, and thereby enable it to maintain the empire of the adjacent seas.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

*To Earl Spencer.*

January 23rd, 1799.

My Lord,

I am sure your lordship was not aware of the outrage offered to me, and the injustice done to Captain Newhouse, when you authorized a commission to be signed, appointing Lieutenant Austin\* Commander of the *Petterel*; and I hope Rear Admiral Gambier was unacquainted with the circumstances of the case. The fact is, that upon the dismissal of Lord Henry Paulet, Captain Newhouse received an acting order to command the *Thalia*, until he could join the *Petterel*, for which sloop he had a commission from me, in an authorized vacancy; but he never was able to join her, until she came down from Minorca, when he took the command of her, and was despatched upon an important service, which he performed in a very officer-like manner; and the moment Lieutenant Long and the officers and men, who were made prisoners and carried into Carthage, arrived, an inquiry into their conduct was instituted, the result of which having proved honourable to them, the lieutenants and warrant officers were re-appointed immediately. Your lordship will, upon this

\* Now Rear-Admiral Sir Francis William Austin, one of my oldest acquaintance in the service. He commanded the *Petterel* when my youngest brother, then first lieutenant, was mortally wounded.

recital, perceive the injury done to Captain Newhouse, and the humiliation heaped upon my head in the face of the fleet I have the honour to command, by this hasty measure; and I rely on the strict principles of justice which govern all your actions, for reparation being made to Captain Newhouse; for, however hard the commission given by the Board to Lieutenant Austin bears upon me, I know my duty too well to withhold it for a moment.

I have the honour, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

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The nobleman alluded to in the above letter had been captain of the *Thalia*, of 36 guns, and unfortunately so far forgot himself as to strike Mr. Forbes, his first lieutenant, on the quarter-deck, when in the execution of his duty. For this act he was tried and dismissed the service, but restored shortly after, and appointed Captain of the *Defence*, of 74 guns. Poor Forbes, who was a most gallant fellow and an excellent officer, never obtained any promotion, which Lord Henry Paulet, who was subsequently a Lord of the Admiralty, should have made a point of obtaining for him.

The following letter conveys a pretty picture of the state of dock yard management at the momentous period referred to, and adds to our impression of the mental anxiety which must

have attended Lord St. Vincent's command under such circumstances.

*To E. Nepean, Esq.*

Gibraltar, 29th January, 1799.

My dear Nepean,

We are literally without a fathom of rope, yard of canvas, foot of oak or elm plank, board or log to saw them out of; have not a bit of iron but what we draw out of condemned masts and yards, nor the smallest piece of fir plank, board or quarter stuff, but what they produce; and the last large stick was wrought into a topmast for the *Thalia* yesterday; add to this, that three-fourths of the ships under my command are so much out of repair and shook, that, were they in England, no one would go to sea in them—and you will feel for

Your friend,

ST. VINCENT.

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The following letter, so far at least as relates to the solicited appointment, may be looked upon as a model for this sort of application; including, as it does, a due and well-balanced regard for every interest connected with the matter. At the same time it shows the sad principle on which such appointments were suffered to be made and maintained.



*To Earl Spencer.*

February 8th, 1799.

My Lord,

General O'Hara interests himself very much in favour of a family of the name of Morrison, old inhabitants of the Rock. The father, who is registrar of the Court of Admiralty, has received a stroke of palsy; and is in a declining way; and the support of the family entirely depending on the emoluments of his office, the governor has importuned me to solicit your lordship to permit his resigning in favour of his second son Charles, who appears to be a sober, discreet, and diligent youth, and is said to discharge the duties of the office for his father with ability. At the same time that I make this representation to your lordship, it is a duty I owe to you and to the public, to observe that the absence of Mr. Frazer from his duty during such a number of years has been productive of great injury to all the jurisprudence of this place, and that in future no person holding the employment he did ought to be permitted to serve by deputy, for reasons I shall have the honour to explain when we meet. In the meantime I see no objection whatever to the younger Morrison succeeding his father, if your lordship, in consideration of the indigence of the family and the governor's anxiety for their

welfare, should think fit to approve the proposition.

General O'Hara has consented to spare a sufficient quantity of ground in the Rosier quarter, to erect the reservoir and victualling stores and offices, and we have every reason to believe that the expence of the building will be defrayed by the produce of the sale of the present victualling office, &c., with a surplus.

Your lordship may be assured that the most sedulous attention shall be paid to this important object, in which I am very ably and honestly assisted by Mr. Tucker.

I have the honour, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

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In order to understand the full force of the following letter, the reader must have seen Gibraltar, and be well acquainted with its localities, its fortifications, and its anchorage. It is one of those places which the pencil can describe with greater accuracy than the pen. Gibraltar is a place which Englishmen ought to know and to revere. It affords at once a monument of her past deeds, and a proof of her present power. Its improvement for the convenience of our shipping should never be lost sight of. The Mole should be kept up at almost any expence. But I believe the government are now sufficiently awake to the necessity of having

a watchful eye on this important fortress. I presented Lord St. Vincent with a panoramic drawing of the Rock and Bay, which I took from my own ship in 1812. It embraced the whole circle, from Centa round the coast of Barbary, westward, and from Cabrita to Europa Point. His Lordship placed it in his drawing-room, and said he took great delight in looking at it, as it reminded him of many by-gone events—

“ The deeds of the days of other years.”

*To Earl Spencer.*

12th February, 1799.

My Lord,

Before a plan for the naval victualling stores, houses, offices, &c., is determined on, I judge it expedient to send your lordship copies of the ideas of the governor and chief engineer, upon providing victualling magazines for the garrison against a siege, by making souterrains in the rock, under the naval hospital. In the plan of Colonel Pringle it was proposed to have a small mole in Rosier Bay, for boats to deliver the provisions under a crane: in the plan upon a larger scale by Major Fyers, a mole was intended in Camp Bay, a quarter of a mile to the north of Rosier Bay, with souterrain to communicate with the magazines under the hospital. The governor and engineers take a

siege for their datum; while I think only of a bombardment from the present lines; for, unless the enemy has the undisputed command of those seas, provision cannot be made for a besieging army. A large circuit of the country around Gibraltar being exceedingly barren, the supplies must necessarily be furnished coastwise; besides, the expence of the work would be too great to come within a naval estimate in time of peace; and dry provisions could be preserved in the projected souterains. For these reasons, I am decidedly of opinion that the stores should connect with the reservoir, and a small mole made in Rosier Bay to deliver provisions, where gun-boats might take refuge in case of a bombardment; the new mole being within flight of a shell from a mortar battery, near Fort St. Philip. The commissioner is very partial to Mr. Bochet's plan, (No. 1), first made under Mr. Inglefield's direction; and it certainly appears very pretty upon paper, but in my judgment there are two insuperable objections to it; first, having the officers' houses and offices within the stores, by which they would be exposed to accident by fire, and the servants tempted to peculate; and, secondly, that the building would be raised so high above the parapet of the mortar battery as to become an object for the gun and mortar boats to fire at and teaze incessantly. I therefore give the preference to

1. 1. 1. SPENCER

including the mole, we  
relieve may be achieved  
the present victualling

the honour, Sir,

St. Vincent.

Spencer.

St. Vincent, 13th February, 1799.

My dear Sir,

I have just learned from the  
General Agent to Lord  
Spencer, in his Excellency's letters to me,  
that the Sicilian  
armies are not to expect further  
military support from France, which is morally  
equivalent to a refusal of the blockade of Alex-  
andria and the prosecution of the  
sieges of Sicily and Malta, have swallowed  
in their march the force under my command,  
and I am therefore to expect that no officer in  
his Majesty's service, not myself, would have  
survived what I have done. Lord Keith has  
retained ships in the line and three sloops  
under his command, some of the former in so  
great a state they are obliged to come occa-  
sionally and the name to be patched up. The  
Princess Royal is intended just gone out, and  
the Prince George, now lying in to come at

her leaks, which are several streaks under water ; we have also had to shift the mainmasts of the Edgar, Powerful, and Marlborough, and are driven to our wit's end for resources. In truth, the mast last prepared could not have been effected without extracting the iron from those disabled in the action of the Nile ; and we are without sails, canvass, cordage, oak, elm, or fir planks, and, what is still more alarming, our provisions run very short. Unfortunately, Lord Keith has been forced, by blowing weather, to take shelter in Tetuan Bay, and only one ship, the Hector, off Cadiz, for the few remaining victuallers expected from Lisbon.

The want of frigates, to communicate with Lord Nelson and Commodore Duckworth, is very distressing ; and I cannot call the Flora and Caroline from the north-west coast of Spain, as they, with the Speedy and Mondovi sloops, compose all the force I can give for the protection of the outward and homeward-bound Portugal trade ; which has suffered much from the depredations of small French privateers, and a great deal of clamour has ensued. Ten additional efficient frigates and sloops are absolutely necessary for carrying on the extensive service of this command, and there really should be something like a relief to the ships which form the blockade of Cadiz, some of them having been ten and eleven months out of port, and the

health of their crews put to great risk, although it has been hitherto miraculously preserved.

In this statement, however incredible it may appear, I do assure your lordship I have nothing exaggerated. Yet I am much more affected by the discontents of Lord Nelson and Captain Trowbridge; the former continuing seemingly determined upon relinquishing his command and returning to England, and the latter in such a state of despondency, from the slight he has received, which he terms an indelible disgrace, that I really am at a loss how to act. The arrival of the *San Leon* (with a commission for his first lieutenant to command her) may operate to pacify him, although he left Palermo in a mood that has given me inexpressible pain.

I have the honour, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

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Trowbridge was as gallant and as fine a fellow as ever graced the British service; but Nelson claimed for him that which, if granted, must have levelled every distinction of merit in the service, and which I, who have ever been an admirer of his character, cannot concede to him the right to claim, and am certain that he never would have conceded it to others. Nelson, in a letter to Earl St. Vincent, 19th October, 1798, Clarke and M<sup>r</sup> Arthur, p. 513, says, "I consider

Captain Trowbridge's conduct as fully entitled to praise as any one officer in the squadron, and as highly deserving of reward. He commanded a division equally with Sir James Saumarez, by my order, dated in June; and I should feel distressed if any honour granted to the one be not granted to the other." This was kind to Trowbridge, at the expence of Sir James Saumarez, who was deprived of every superior reward or distinction for his services at the Nile, where he was second in command to Nelson, for fear it should give offence to Trowbridge. No one can blame, and any one who knew him must lament, the misfortune which befel the Culloden, and prevented her taking her station in the line at the Battle of Aboukir. No one can doubt the effect which his ship and his valour and judgment would have had in accelerating the destruction of the enemy's fleet. But still he was *not* in the fight, and Sir James Saumarez *was* in it. Sir James not only engaged his opponent and took her, but he also sank the *Artemise*, on his starboard-side, at the same time. Now, to view this impartially, we must place the bandage over the eyes of justice, and ask whether, if Trowbridge had done this, and De Saumarez had been left on the shoal, would Nelson have held the same language? In fact, Trowbridge was ever the friend of Nelson, and De Saumarez was not. There was always a



coolness between them after the battle of the 14th of February ; and Lord de Saumarez told me himself, about five years ago, that he never thought he was kindly or fairly treated by Nelson.

The following, to Mr. Nepean, will show that Lord St. Vincent was ever the active advocate for distressed merit.

*To E. Nepean, Esq.*

Gibraltar, 13th February, 1799.

My dear Nepean,

On my arrival here three years ago, I attempted, through Lord Hugh Seymour, to obtain something for the support of a numerous and respectable family, as per enclosed. I have now to entreat you will, in your official capacity, endeavour to do justice to them. Should any thing more be wanting than the explanation given by the elegant pen of Mrs. Baynes, you shall have it the moment I know from you the nature of the document required. In the mean while, you cannot oblige me more than by following up this application until right is done, and I will thank you to show Mrs. Baynes's letter to Lord and Lady Spencer.

Your's truly,

ST. VINCENT.

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*To Earl Spencer.*

Gibraltar, 21st February, 1799.

My dear Lord,

I have the honour to send you a plan of the arsenal of Port Mahon, which has received many improvements since I was acquainted with it. Commodore Duckworth says, there is a new storehouse building upon the site of one pulled down, which, if the island should become a permanent possession, might be turned into proper houses for the commissioners and officers of the yard; who certainly ought never to reside in the town, (an opinion I join with him in most cordially)—for I well remember much delay, inconvenience, and peculation arising from the distant residence of the officers. Commissioner Coffin writes in raptures of the capability of his department; and Dr. Wier reports, in the most favourable manner, of the naval hospital, which is purified from the filthy state the Spaniards left it in, and is altogether the completest thing of the kind in Europe.

Happily there are few sick in either department; and as there is always a plentiful supply of vegetables, and a prospect of getting cattle from Algiers, I am in great hopes the troops and seamen will continue healthy.

I have the honour, &amp;c.,

ST. VINCENT.

The more we read of the capabilities of this island, the more we are induced to regret that it should ever have been restored to a nation who never knew the use or the value of it. The Minorquenes still persevere in the practice, or did till very lately, of making their oxen tread out the corn. A naval officer showed them a flail, and instructed them in the manner of using it; but they rejected the instrument and the instruction, because their fathers had done so before them.

The ill-informed and prejudiced men, who, in the House of Commons, in 1805-6-7, declaimed against Lord St. Vincent, would probably have blushed could they have read the following letter to Lord Spencer. This would have given them some idea of the actual state of our ships, and the manner in which they were sent to sea, of which these ignorant people could have formed no idea. And yet, such was the state of our shipping generally, and such the mode of executing the work in our dock-yards, when Lord St. Vincent entered into the office of First Lord of the Admiralty. Nor is it intended by these observations to cast any reflections on his predecessor, Lord Spencer, whose naval administration (making the allowance for family influence) was as upright and impartial as any we ever had. His lordship had immense difficulties to contend with; and the wear and tear

of ships, with the constant demand for reliefs on all our stations, was more than he could keep pace with. These were facts which none could know so well as those who held the highly responsible situation of first lord of the Admiralty, or head minister of the Marine of the greatest naval empire in the world.

*To Earl Spencer.*

Gibraltar, February 24th, 1799.

My Lord,

Apprehensive that the Board may disapprove of the frequent representations of the defects of ships sent out to this station, I have no alternative but to state to your lordship the extreme peril the Prince George and Princess Royal have been put to, by the former, after having been very many years copper sheathed, and on shore for several hours in a very dangerous position, not having her copper ripped off, her bottom caulked, and the riders new bolted, and the latter receiving so superficial a tinkering that she leaked alarmingly in Portsmouth Harbour, and made so much water on her passage to Lisbon, that we were obliged to lighten her to come at one considerable ascertained leak ; and, on an inspection of her in this mole, all her bolts were so loose that they were moved by a common hammer, and had the copper of the Prince George started a little

more, she must inevitably have gone down ; for the oakum in all her seams is rotten, and her butts quite open. I entreat, therefore, that two substantially sound ships may be sent to relieve them, as soon as possible ; and I wish also for a third, to supply the place of the *Namur*—also complaining, as is the *Hector*.

I have the honour, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

*To Rear-Admiral Gambier.*

Gibraltar, 28th February, 1799.

Sir,

Nothing less than giving the rank of post-captain to Captain Newhouse can repair the unheard-of and unmerited injury and injustice done to him, and the outrage offered to me ; which (although I am persuaded it was not seen at the moment) has produced an effect here highly prejudicial to his Majesty's service—the sure concomitant of every measure that tends to diminish the weight and importance of a commander-in-chief at all times, more especially when he has to contend against the factious discontents of the higher orders, and the mutinous spirit of the lower.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient, &c.,

ST. VINCENT.

It appears, with reference to the following letter to Mr. Nepean, that the Portuguese Government had determined to withdraw their squadron from the blockade of Malta, when it had been for nearly three years acting as our auxiliary. This was a serious loss to us, at a time that Lord Nelson, who was entrusted with the defence of Sicily and the Kingdom of Naples, had not ships enough to guard all his vulnerable points. It is true the Portuguese squadron, under the command of the Marquis de Nisa, had not much to do with fighting; but, as the work of blockading the island of Malta required little more than a sharp look-out, and as their vigilance was stimulated by the chance of prize-money, this aid was not to be despised.

Malta was taken in the following year, and the Portuguese squadron had the honour of assisting at its capture.

*To E. Nepean, Esq.*

Le Souverain, Gibraltar, 5th March, 1799.

Sir,

I enclose, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the copy of a letter I yesterday received from Don Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho, with my answer thereto; and I shall, in a few days, send up to Rear-Admiral Lord Nelson the necessary instructions for carrying the command of his Royal

Highness the Prince of the Brazils into execution.

Their Lordships will be aware that the retiring of the Portuguese auxiliary squadron will make a great chasm in the defence of the island of Sicily; for Lord Nelson has not a greater number of British ships of war than are necessary to the blockades of Alexandria and Malta. Could he have given a few more to the latter, the assault, in all probability, would have succeeded; and as, from the active spirit of the French, it may be reasonably expected they will attempt to throw troops across the Channel, between Calabria and Sicily, I submit to their Lordships the urgent necessity of a reinforcement in frigates and sloops of war; for if they once get footing in the island it will be lost.

I am, Sir, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

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*To Earl Spencer.*

Gibraltar, 7th March, 1799:

My Lord,

The just apprehension I was under last evening, of the easterly wind being on the wane, prevented my sending a copy of Lord Nelson's last letter, and an extract of one I received from Commodore Duckworth, by the William Pitt

cutter ; and it was very fortunate I did not detain her, the wind having this morning come to the westward. Your Lordship will perceive that Lord Nelson thinks the island of Sicily on the eve of a revolution ; and Commodore Duckworth is evidently disappointed that he did not receive some mark of royal favour, and approbation of his services, when General Stuart was created a K.B., and will, I am sure, represent me as lukewarm to the profession, if I do not at least state his expectations, which I understand, from Captain Digby, are to be created a Baronet. It is certainly very unusual for a person detached, as he was, under a plan and instruction from his commander-in-chief, from which the circumstances attending the enterprize did not require the smallest deviation, to be distinguished in the manner he looks for. Very different was the case of General Stuart, who received his instructions from the secretary of state for the war department, and was himself a commander-in-chief. I conclude, the Commodore must take his datum from Lord Nelson ; although the cases differ in an essential degree ; the latter being left entirely to his own judgment : for, as I neither knew the destination of Bonaparte, nor the probable position the French squadron was likely to be attacked in, I could give no other orders than general ones, posi-



tively directing the rear-admiral to bring the enemy to a decisive action wherever he met him.

Having said this, I certainly shall be very glad to see the ambition of the Commodore gratified; for he is above the ordinary class of sea-officers, has acquitted himself entirely to my approbation, (except the appointment of a commissioner, in which his vanity got the better of his discretion) and has upon former occasions attracted the attention of the Admiralty Board. I therefore leave his pretensions with your Lordship, whose superior judgment and experience in these matters will determine what is right to be done upon the occasion.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.\*

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*To Earl Spencer.*

(SECRET).

Gibraltar, 10th March, 1799.

My Lord,

Mr. Ygea, the commissary who transacts the tobacco business here on behalf of the King of Spain, and who is attached to the Prince of Peace, has communicated to me, by directions

\* The ambition of the kind-hearted Sir John Duckworth was gratified: he was created a Baronet. He was gallant, honest, and hospitable.

of that minister, that the extreme distress the government of Spain is in for specie, and the danger of longer delaying their public payments, is so alarming, that he is prompted to ask for an English frigate to bring remittances from the Spanish colonies to Gibraltar, to be afterwards conveyed into Spain. I felt it proper to say I was not invested with authority to countenance such a measure; but that, if his Serene Highness made a distinct application to me, I would convey it to the British ministry under a seal of secrecy. It is evident that the court of Spain is trembling under the menaces of France; and the Spanish army is so ill paid, and the people so dissatisfied with the oppression they suffer, a revolution will be brought about whenever the French are able to march an army into the country; in which event Portugal must fall too; for the French opinions have gained great ground there, among all ranks of people; and as (without pretending to be a politician) I cannot conceive a greater evil to Great Britain than these two countries falling under the subjugation of France, I shall keep this proposition open, until I receive instructions upon a subject much too weighty for me to advance a step in without them.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

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How complicated are the ways of men ! At war with Spain, we are requested to send one of our own frigates to bring home her treasures for paying the forces we are opposed to ; and while this was doing abroad, our manufacturers at home were supplying the French armies with clothing, and steel to make their arms !

It would appear, from the following letter, that the mutiny, although generally extinguished, was still lurking in some of our ships ; and a great deal of caution and management was requisite, in preserving the fleet in proper order. It appears that discipline still required more victims. I remember Joyce very well : he was gunner's mate of the *Queen Charlotte* when I was in her in 1795. I frequently observed that man in deep conversation with some of his shipmates, and looking suspiciously whenever an officer approached them. This was two years before the mutiny.

*To E. Nepean, Esq.*

Gibraltar, 15th March, 1799.

My dear Nepean,

The weakness of ————, in the character of president of a court-martial, exceeds that of ———— if possible : add to this, that Joyce and other delegates are come out here as petty officers, in bombs and other vessels.

as a reward for the distinguished share they had in the mutinies at home ; and you will see that I almost stand alone to combat the infernal spirit which still pervades his Majesty's fleet, and I do not believe will ever be completely eradicated. I conclude the prisoner under sentence of death must be pardoned ; although I cannot, without the most glaring — nay, almost criminal — inconsistency, do that which my disposition naturally inclines me to in this case ; for one criminal at least has been executed, whose offence was not of so deep a dye as this unfortunate man's.\*

Your maxim of distributing the crews of ships tainted with sedition is certainly a good one, but it ought not to have extended to so great a degree in the *Blenheim* ; her people having proved themselves the best and quietest in the service, upon all occasions. The *Prince George's*, *Culloden's*, *Zealous's*, and several others here, are of the same description ; and if you turn the whole company of the former into the *Temeraire*, or any other ship just off the stocks, or from a repair in dock, they would fit her for sea in ten days.

The stem of the *Hector*, we apprehend, was injured when the knee of her head was twisted

\* Could this have been the man from the *Romulus*, who pointed the gun aft, and whom Collingwood threatened to head up in a cask ?

by running foul of some ship ; for the hooding ends are perfect, and we cannot otherwise account for the leak. When similar accidents happen, the knee should be taken off and new bolted, not set straight and botched, as in this case.

Your's truly,  
ST. VINCENT.

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*To Earl Spencer.*

Gibraltar, 21st March, 1799.

My Lord,

I am honoured with your Lordship's letters of the 9th and 22d January ; and as it would have been the height of injustice to have placed an officer of such uncommon merit as Captain Brown\* in a 12-pounder frigate, not much more than half manned, I have given him a commission for the Foudroyant, subject to a removal into the Vanguard, when Lord Nelson decides whether he will go to England ; which he seems determined on, or continue in the Mediterranean. The promotion to the flag has happily removed a number of officers from the command of ships of the line, who at no period of their lives were capable of commanding them ; and I am sorry to have occasion to observe, that the present state of the upper part

\* The late Commissioner William Brown, who died at Jamaica.

of the list of captains is not much better than it stood before.

I will obey your Lordship's commands touching Lieutenant James Dalrymple—who appears as if he were going into a dropsy, and I very much doubt whether he will be able to serve long in this climate, which is fatal to all who are in declining health.

The squadron has been again driven into Tetuan Bay, where it is anchored; and I am sending stores of every kind, of which it is in extreme want, and two transports loaded with water, for its supply. The great plenty of oranges, lemons, and poultry, there is at Tetuan, where the emperor has relaxed much of his rigid treatment, (there being no French or Spaniards to watch over the Alcalde,) will afford considerable refreshment; and when Vice-Admiral Lord Keith repasses the Straits, he is to send to Lagos Bay for cattle. Having sent so large a quantity of provisions to Minorca, for the supply of the garrison, and the squadrons under the orders of Lord Nelson and Rear-Admiral Duckworth, the Victualling Board cannot be too expeditious in forwarding another supply to this place, the Tagus being now totally out of the question.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

At this time, Lord St. Vincent had disposed of his fleet in such a manner as to watch all the most important points of the enemy's coast. Lord Keith was off Cadiz, Nelson at Naples, Duckworth at Minorca, Sir Sydney Smith at Acre, Hood and Hallowell at Alexandria, and Sir Alexander Ball commanding the blockade of Malta, assisted by the Marquis de Nisa with the Portuguese squadron.

*To Earl Spencer.*

Gibraltar, 25th March, 1799.

My Lord,

The Penelope and Sandwich cutters shall be sent up to Lord Nelson, who has already under his orders a very large proportion of our frigates; so that, with what are necessary for Minorca, the north-west coast of Spain, and Portugal, I cannot give one to the squadron before Cadiz. I am not surprised at the pressing solicitation of the Marquis de Circello; for no reliance whatever can be placed on Neapolitan officers, seamen, or soldiers; and the island of Sicily can only be preserved by British ships and troops.

I very much lament that Captain Boyle was prevented from coming out in the Hyæna, by the unlucky accident he met with; because it would have given me very great pleasure to

• Now Rear-Admiral the Hon. Sir Courtney Boyle.

have pushed his fortunes—which, from the good order and discipline the Kangaroo appeared to be in, I am persuaded he merits. His new connexion with my old acquaintance Mr. Poyntz, and relative situation with respect to your Lordship, would also have prompted me to show him every mark of kindness.

The squadron assembled before Cadiz consists of sixteen sail of the line. Lord Keith is in Tetuan Bay, with twelve, completely victualled and watered.\* The Foudroyant will sail in the morning to join him; the Hector, patched up in the best manner our means afford, will follow in a day or two; and the Namur the moment she is caulked and vamped up. The Defence is the only ship without the Straits; but Lord Keith

\* Although the deed of a near relative, I see no reason why I should conceal the following fact:—Lord St. Vincent was waiting, with great anxiety, the arrival of some transports from Lisbon, then hourly expected, with provisions for the fleet, of which they were in much want. Lord Keith was gone, in the mean time, to Tetuan Bay, to take in water and bullocks. The convoy at length appeared; and, as they came near Cabreta Point, were attacked by the heavy Spanish gunboats from Algeziras. The Speedy let them approach her within pistol-shot, taking care to keep between them and the convoy, and when certain of his mark, the studding-sails and royals were let fall, and she rounded to and gave them some well-directed broadsides of round and grape, shaving them at the same time so close as to carry away their sweeps. The poor Spaniards were perfectly confounded. The convoy came in in safety, and then proceeded to Tetuan Bay, where the fleet was instantly completed with all it required. Lord St. Vincent was an eye-witness to this action, and never forgot it; and the compliment paid to the captain by the governor of the garrison was in general orders for that night: — “Parole, Speedy; countersign, Brenton,” the name of the captain.



will avail himself of the first spirt of easterly wind to resume his station.

Admiral Frederick is very ill, and I fear will not last long, so that your Lordship's arrangements in favour of Admiral Duckworth indent well.

I have the honour, &c.

ST. VINCENT.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON :

V. SHOBERT, JUN., LEICESTER STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.







